

NEWS MEDIA REPRESENTATIONS OF WOMEN IN CONFLICTS: THE BOKO  
HARAM CONFLICT IN BORNO STATE, NORTH EAST NIGERIA (2012-2015)-A  
STUDY OF *GUARDIAN*, *DAILY TRUST*, *DAILY SUN*, *LEADERSHIP*, *NATION*, AND  
*THISDAY* NEWSPAPERS

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## DECLARATION

*“The material being presented for examination is my own work and has not been submitted for an award of this or another HEI except in minor particulars which are explicitly noted in the body of the thesis. Where research pertaining to the thesis was undertaken collaboratively, the nature and extent of my individual contribution has been made explicit.”*

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## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this work to Almighty God without whose grace, guidance, provision, protection, and mercies I would not have survived the very tough and stressful periods of loss, bereavement, lack, and ill-health. To Him, I return all the glory, honour and worship.

I also dedicate this thesis to my beloved late parents- Chief Inspector Mwajim Shaffa Mshelia and Mrs Clara Mwajim Mshelia (my beautiful Eminado). I am deeply indebted to you for believing in me and sacrificing so much to make me what I am today; as well as inculcating in me the values of honesty, hard work, perseverance and doggedness. Your memories will always remain indelible on my mind.

## ABSTRACT

This is a study of news media representations of women in the Boko Haram conflict in Borno state, North East Nigeria (2012-2015) with a focus on six Nigerian national newspapers - *Guardian*, *Daily Trust*, *Daily Sun*, *Leadership*, *Nation*, and *Thisday*. It draws on post-colonial theories like Orientalism and the Subaltern; feminism; and the news media to examine how the news media have represented women in this conflict. The study adopted a mixed method approach combining quantitative content analysis and qualitative thematic analysis. The quantitative analysis examined the manifest contents of the newspaper articles in the sample to find out the pattern of frames used by Nigerian journalists to represent women in the Boko Haram conflict while the qualitative analysis examined information generated from semi-structured interviews; documentary data; and the translation of *YouTube* videos released by the Boko Haram sect. A total of 404 newspaper articles were selected, categorized, and examined using SPSS software.

Findings suggest that patriarchal phrases and gender stereotypes permeate news media narratives about women affected by the conflict. This thesis therefore provides a better understanding of how Nigerian news media represent women affected by conflicts and factors that inform these representations. This work also provides a better insight into how the intersectionality of gender with other social structures like class, age, ethnicity, religion, patriarchal discrimination and other forms of oppression have permeated media representations of women in the conflict. Results similarly suggest that the Nigerian media over rely on foreign news media organizations as their major story sources about the conflict. Because of this overreliance, this thesis argues that foreign news media set the agenda for Nigerian news media in their representations of women. This study has contributed to a better understanding of how elite news media in the more developed global North set the news agenda for developing nations of the global South like Nigeria through inter-media agenda setting.

Findings also suggest that the Nigerian news media system reflects the social, political, religious, ethnic, and regional factors of the area within which it operates in line with the framework of regional parallelism. This study has contributed to a better understanding of how Nigeria's North/South dichotomies based on these factors have affected the news media. This thesis concludes that as a product of regional parallelism, the Nigerian news media reflect the intersectionality of gender, social structures such as race, ethnic, religious, sexual orientation and patriarchal discrimination with other forms of oppression to disadvantage women in the Boko Haram conflict.

**KEY WORDS:** Nigeria, Women, Boko Haram conflict, News Media Representations, Gender Stereotypes, Patriarchy, Inter-media Agenda Setting, Development Journalism, Regional Parallelism, Intersectionality.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

A Message to The World (translated from Hausa Language)

They were arresting and molesting our members who are just serving Allah; [...] now they have continued capturing our women. [...] about seven women were captured, and we don't even know where they are, [...]; in fact, they are even having sex with one of them. [...] only Allah knows the actual number of our women being held, women who are married in accordance with Islamic law. [...]. Since you are now holding our women, (laughs) just wait and see what will happen to your own women. Just wait and see what will happen to your own wives according to Sharia law, (laughs) just wait and see if it is sweet and convenient for you.

- Abubakar Shekau's *You Tube* message uploaded on 30/09/2012.

This extract from a video released by the Boko Haram leader Abubakar Shekau marked the beginning of the sect's strategic and systematic attacks on women. The Collins English Dictionary defined a sect as a "group of people that has separated from a larger group and has a particular set of religious or political beliefs". The dictionary also referred to a sect as a "schismatic religious body characterized by an attitude of exclusivity in contrast to the more inclusive religious groups". The Cambridge English Dictionary similarly defined a sect as a "religious group that has separated from a larger religion and is considered to have extreme or unusual beliefs or customs". The Boko Haram sect fits into these definitions as it is a group which is ready to take extreme measures like murder to impose its unusual beliefs and customs on people who are opposed to its doctrines.

Initially, when the attacks started women were not specifically targeted but fell within the general population of victims. But the above threats by the sect's leader changed the narrative and Boko Haram's strategies in its campaign against the Nigerian state which has led to the destruction of many lives and properties. In the agricultural sector, for example, people are facing food shortages and hunger (Barnato, 2014). This is due to the fear of attacks on farmers and farmlands which have become hideouts for sect members who often target the agricultural sector for daily food supplies. Ogbonna and Jimenez (2017) argued that "the overall impact has manifested in food shortages, increased price of food items, poverty and hunger" (p. 15). There is therefore a huge decline in agricultural production due to difficulties in mobility and attacks on farmlands and storage facilities.

People living in the conflict zone of Northern Nigeria have also been forced to migrate. Most of the affected persons have sought refuge in Internally Displaced Persons' (IDP) camps spread across the three affected states of Borno, Yobe and Adamawa. The International Organization for Migration (IOM 2015 Report) estimated that about 2 million people have been displaced in these affected states. The activities of the Boko Haram sect have similarly discouraged businesses in many parts of the areas affected by their activities. It is estimated that about 73.3 percent of businesses in the Northern states of Borno, Yobe, Kano and Sokoto have partially shut down due to fear of attacks (Chukwurah et al, 2013). The conflict has also encouraged embezzlement and diversion of funds meant to fight the insurgency. This has affected socio-economic development in the conflict zone. For instance, claims of the diversion of monies meant for prosecuting the conflict in the name of 'security votes' for personal use are widespread (Ali, 2016). Nkwede et al. (2015) argued that this has resulted in "micro economic instability, distortion and leakages in the Nigerian economy with the attendant problem of infrastructural decay and hyperinflation" (p. 69). A case in point is the ongoing trial of the former National Security Adviser (NSA) to the then Nigerian President Goodluck



Jonathan - Sambo Dasuki - for diverting US\$2 billion allocated for the purchase of military hardware meant for the Nigerian military campaign (Ali, 2016).

The 2017 Global Terrorism Index (GTI) produced by the Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP) identified the Boko Haram sect as one of the four deadliest terrorists' groups in the world responsible for 59 per cent of all deaths in 2016. According to GTI (2017), the sect killed over 12,000 Nigerians between 2013 and 2015. The number of deaths peaked in 2014 when over 7,500 people were killed. Women, children and youths constituted most of the internally displaced persons (GTI, 2017). The 2015 World Terrorism Index had also shown that Boko Haram is the world's deadliest terrorist organization in 2015, having killed more people than the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levante (ISIL) in 2014 (GTI, 2015). Some studies (Barkindo et al., 2013; and Osita-Njoku & Chikere 2015) and statistics released by International non-governmental organizations (NGOs) (International Organization for Migration 2015 Report; Amnesty International 2016/17 Reports; and GTI, 2017) revealed that women are most affected by the conflict.

Women and girls have been abducted as weapons of war and terror. They have also been exploited and sexually abused by the sect members, government security agents and Civilian Joint task force (vigilante group) members (Amnesty International 2016/17 Reports). They have similarly been used as suicide bombers, forced into marriages, used as domestic helps while those rescued have been stigmatised and labelled as Boko Haram wives and children consequently facing ostracism. For instance, the GTI (2017) revealed that one of the worst attacks by the sect in 2016 was carried out by a female suicide bomber in an IDP camp which killed 60 people. Similarly, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) (2017) estimated that at least 27 teenage girls have been used as suicide bombers in Borno state within the first quarter of 2017. The Boko Haram conflict is just one among other conflicts in the world where women have been adversely affected. Amnesty International's 2016/2017 reports

revealed that in Africa, “women and girls were frequently subjected to discrimination, marginalization and abuse often because of cultural traditions and norms, and discrimination institutionalized by unjust laws; [and] were also subjected to sexual violence and rape in conflicts and countries hosting large numbers of displaced people and refugees” (p. 22).

Researchers (Cudd & Andreasen, 2005; Harrison et al., 2008; and Liffen, 2011) have identified some reasons why these discriminations and oppressions occur. Cudd and Andreasen (2005) argued that “sexist oppression is not simply rooted in legal and political arrangements; its causes are all pervasive and deeply embedded in every aspect of human social life” (p. 7). Liffen (2011) also argued that “the feminine character, and the ideal of femininity on which it is modelled, are products of masculine society; [...] where it claims to be humane, masculine society breeds in woman its own corrective, and shows itself through this limitation implacably the master” (p. 80). Although in most societies, women are disadvantaged over men, the type of discrimination differs according to class, race, status, society and culture (Barker, 2008). Jones et al. (2010) identified some of the social institutions that have adversely affected women and as: “discriminatory family codes, son bias, physical insecurity, limited resource rights and entitlements, and cultural restrictions on women’s movement and other liberties” (pp. vii-viii). The woman is therefore disadvantaged by her family, society, culture and the government.

Statistics released by various organizations (GTI 2017; Amnesty International 2017; and UNICEF 2017) revealed the magnitude of oppression of women in the society. The World Gender Gap Report (2017) for instance, revealed that the average gender gap stands at 68% and further widened in 2017. The report also revealed that the gaps on economic and political representations have continued to widen in many countries around the world and that they will not close for another 217 years. According to this report, 2017 was the first time in more than 10 years that the gender gap began to widen again with 60 countries recording a decrease, which meant that equality worsened. While inequality grew across all categories, the gap grew

particularly in the economic equality category. The *Guardian* newspaper (2018) argued that “the gap between women’s pay and men’s pay for the same exact job has shrunk to 2%, but the overall gap grew because women do more unpaid work, are more likely to be excluded from the workforce, are more likely to work in lower-paying industries, and are less likely to be elevated to high-paying positions” (p. 1). One of the implications of these statistics is that the economic and political gaps will take several decades before they close.

In the field of education, UNICEF’s (2015) report on girls’ education and gender equality estimates that “31 million girls of primary school age and 32 million girls of lower secondary school age were out of school in 2013 [with] Sub-Saharan Africa [having] the lowest proportion of countries with gender parity” (p. 1). The report identifies negative and strong sociocultural norms that favour boys’ education as some of the major factors contributing to this disparity. Practices that discriminate against African women range from female genital mutilations; child marriages; polygamy; wife beating; negative widowhood practices; denial of the rights to own, keep or inherit property, to participate in decision making, to attain certain educational heights, to gainful employment and to aspire for promotion; denial of freedom of expression, religion and the right to hold opinion (UNICEF, 2015). In a highly gendered society like Nigeria, family institutions involve strict gender norms on marriage, divorce, child custody and inheritance, which all appear to be very restrictive for women. For instance, in Borno state, North East Nigeria, the culture of the Shuwa Arab ethnic group who form part of the diverse ethnic groupings in the state stipulates that its daughters must be circumcised at a young age to maintain their chastity. In a study on women and the news in Nigeria, Harrison et al., (2008) argue:

Nigerian women are confronted with numerous challenges [...] since the culture encourages submissiveness; early marriages; discriminatory inheritance laws, [...] divorce and custody laws; inadequate pre-natal and maternal care; [...] difficulties with

upward mobility in the workplace due to motherhood responsibilities; poverty; lack of education; increased risks of contracting HIV/AIDS; lack of adequate health information; limited access to contraception; international prostitution [...], domestic violence; and female genital [mutilations] (p. 200).

The North East is a patriarchal society with widespread adherence to Islamic tenets in some sections of the constitution which do not favour women. For instance, the 1960 Penal Code of Northern Nigeria as amended, Cap. (2), Subsection 55 (cited in Ekhatior 2015) provides that “nothing is an offence which does not amount to the infliction of grievous harm upon a person and which is done by a husband for correcting his wife” (p. 289). Some of the provisions in this Code allow husbands to beat wives in chastisement. Onyemelukwe (2016) argues:

Many women experienced domestic violence, including financial abuse, abandonment and eviction from their homes. The discrimination embedded in the law was further exacerbated by the active discrimination experienced by women in accessing what limited justice was available. Patriarchal attitudes prevailed and violence against women in their homes were often considered [...] private matters to be settled within the family [which] prevented women from seeking redress from law enforcement for matters such as rape, child marriage, harmful traditional practices and other kinds of violence (p. 7).

The way women are treated in society is deeply rooted in history where they have been relegated to domestic chores within the family (Novikau, 2017). The region’s religious and cultural norms have defined women’s status through marriage and childbearing and largely confined them to a domestic role. Muhammad Kazaure, a member of the House of Representatives in Nigeria captures the reality of the disadvantaged position of the Nigerian

woman on the floor of the House of Representatives during the 2018 International Women's Day celebration:

What I fear Mr. Speaker, they (women) control us at home. When we give them an opportunity outside, when they control us outside the home, they will capture everything; [...] That is what I fear because most of the women are very intelligent because you can see a chief, a big man controlled by his wife. [...] So, if you give them more chance, one day they will overthrow us.

The above extract by one of the members of the House of Representatives' contributions on the debate about the role of women and the need to empower them reflects the sentiments of some Nigerian men. Muhammed Kazaure Gudaji is a member of the Nigerian House of Representatives elected under the All Progressive Congress (APC) representing the Kazaure/Roni/Gwiwa Federal Constituency of Jigawa state. If an honorable member from one of the most important arms of government, the legislature could express such sentiments about women, then the future appears bleak for their empowerment. Compared to men, women are also unequally represented in political participation and decision-making. Kangas et al. (2014) reveal that "women are underrepresented not only in the political sphere but also in decision-making within the private sector, at the village level and in civil society" (p. 65). A comparative analysis of women candidatures and outcomes in the 2011 and 2015 general elections in Nigeria carried out by Idowu et al. (2015) shows a sharp decline in the actual successes recorded by women compared to men despite an increase of women candidates that contested for elective positions. The analysis indicates "a shortfall of 1.8% of women elected into the Senate in 2015 compared to the percentage elected in 2011; [while] the percentage of women [that] contested for presidential position declined from 12.5% in 2011 to 7.1% in 2015 with zero success recorded after the elections" (p. 95). The disadvantaged position of the woman is more glaring when it comes to conflicts and wars where they are more vulnerable and subjected

to all forms of violence. They are often beaten, raped, kidnapped or killed. The United Nations estimates that 1 in every 3 women worldwide will be assaulted or sexually abused in her lifetime (UN 2002 Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace, and Security). A study of the Status of Women and Infants in Complex Humanitarian Emergencies by Al-Gasser et al. (2004) reveals:

Women and children bear the greatest burden during war and long-term disasters and that [such] emergencies are characterized by social disruption, armed conflict, population displacement, collapse of public health infrastructure, and food shortages (p. 8).

Similarly, Duncan et al. (2013) argue that “indigenous women experience intersectional discrimination, and there is strong evidence that they face a higher prevalence of violence, harmful practices, labour exploitation, and harassment, and are more vulnerable to sexual violence in armed conflicts” (p. 4). The news media have been blamed in part for instituting and reinforcing discrimination against women worldwide. Nacos (2005) explains that gender clichés persisted in the mass-mediated portrayal of women because news frames reflect and reinforce deep-seated societal attitudes. Alat (2006) also argues that in gender matters, “patriarchy sets the standards for what carries news value and how certain incidents are reported” (p. 295). The negative framing of women by the news media is a universal phenomenon that has lasted over the years and can be found across varying media forms (Byerly & Ross, 2006). Following a similar line of arguments, Geertsema (2009) argues that “in an era of increasing globalization, women continue to be underrepresented and stereotyped in national, international and global news media” (p. 149). Although the marginalization of women is all pervasive and has permeated every area of human endeavour, the level of this marginalization differs between societies and races. In a conservative society like Nigeria, the news media have often objectified the woman and portrayed her as a sex symbol. This is

because the news narratives about women are steeped in culture and religion and inundated with misrepresentations/underrepresentation of the woman (Ozoemena, 2017). For instance, *Daily Sun* newspaper of Nigeria which claims to be fashioned after the *Sun* newspaper in the UK, also splashes the page 3 Girl in scantily dressed attires on its daily editions.

In Nigeria, the prolonged Boko Haram conflict has exerted a heavy toll on women. Reports indicate that many women, girls and children have been killed, raped, kidnapped and maimed with still more unaccounted for. Amnesty International reports (2015 & 2017) estimated that the sect abducted over 2000 women and girls in 2014 alone while members of the Nigerian military and the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF) have been accused of sexually exploiting women in the IDP camps in exchange for money or food. UNICEF's Report (2017) also revealed that since January 2017, out of the 83 children used as 'human bombs' in the conflict, 55 were girls. Despite the disadvantaged position of the woman in the Nigerian society, compounded by the devastation she faces during conflicts and their aftermath; there is an obvious gap in literature and theory on how the news media have portrayed and represented women in the conflict.

Although there exists substantial body of research and information about media portrayal of the 17-year Boko Haram conflict in Nigeria, the available literature suggests an absence of research on how the news media have represented women in the conflict. Several studies (Isa, 2010; Samu, 2012; Yusha'u, 2012; Onuoha, 2012; Ette, 2013; Musa & Yusha'u, 2013; Hamid & Baba, 2014; Okoro & Chukwuma, 2014; Ugwu, 2015; and Gwadabe, 2015) have conducted research on the Boko Haram conflict. Others have attempted to examine the conflict and its implications on women (Barkindo et al., 2013; Zenn & Pearson, 2014; Osita-Njoku & Chikere, 2015; and Okwudiri & Chukwuemeka, 2015). For example, investigations were conducted on how the Boko Haram conflict is impacting women (Barkindo et al., 2013; and Osita-Njoku & Chikere, 2015) as well as Boko Haram's use of female suicide bombers

and its implications (Onuoha & George, 2015). These studies focused mainly on the impact of Boko Haram's attacks on women.

Similarly, Zenn and Pearson (2014) explored the evolution of gender-based changes in Boko Haram's tactics and its instrumental use of women. Their study also outlined the instrumental use of women by both Boko Haram and Nigerian security forces in a cycle of abductions and detentions dating from 2012. It concluded that abductions of women have constituted a semi-official Boko Haram tactic in response to similar tactics by government. Secondly, Zenn and Pearson (2014) found that the violence has caused Boko Haram to evolve tactically, engaging women in support roles in the group, and disguising men as women to avoid arrests. This study did not include the role of the news media in the tactical use of women by the sect (Zenn & Pearson, 2014). A study by Christian et al. (2015) examined how Nigerian news media framed the abduction of the Chibok girls but concentrated on how media audiences reacted to the attack. This study failed to investigate how the news media portrayed the abducted girls in their reportage. There is therefore a gap in the literature since these studies only examined the consequences of Boko Haram's actions on women without examining how the news media represented them. Again, because some of these studies overlooked the importance of the news media in the Boko Haram conflict and their implication for women, their contributions to literature and theory about news media representations of women in conflict is lacking.

These are some of the gaps that this thesis has attempted to fill. This research is therefore one of the first attempts to examine news media representations of women in the Boko Haram conflict. Some of the aims of this study are to find out how the Nigerian news media represents women in the conflict; factors contributing to these representations; whether the Nigerian news media have adequately represented women affected by the Boko Haram conflict or not; and how they might improve their representations of women in conflicts. To do



this, 404 articles were examined from four key incidents that affected women in the conflict in the period 2012-2015 spread across six selected Nigerian national newspapers: *Guardian*, *Daily Trust*, *Daily Sun*, *Leadership*, *Nation*, and *Thisday*.

This thesis draws on post-colonial and feminist theories to examine how the Nigerian news media represented women in the Boko Haram conflict. It relies on Edward Said's (1978) postulations on Orientalism and Gayatri Spivak's (1988) on the Subaltern. It also builds on feminist theories especially radical feminism, which attributes oppression and domination against women to male-dominated social structures and the socialization practices that teach gender-specific roles for men and women (Radford & Stanko, 1996; Moser & Clark, 2001; Cockburn, 2001; and hooks, 2005). At the heart of radical feminism is the assumption that men are responsible for and benefit from abuse and exploitation of women. Patriarchy and the systematic domination of women by men are central to this theory and root causes of violence against women in society. The agenda-setting theory of the news media in relation to intermedia agenda setting role of elite foreign news organizations is also examined in this thesis. This work also builds on the concept of regional parallelism as the framework within which Nigerian news media operate.

A theoretical contribution this thesis makes to scholarship is to give a better understanding and insight into how the intersectionality of gender with other social structures of class, age, ethnicity, religion, patriarchal discrimination and other forms of oppression have permeated media narratives about women affected by the Boko Haram conflict. This study similarly adds to an understanding of how the Nigerian news media system takes on the colouration of the social, political, religious, ethnic, geographical and regional inclinations of the society within which it operates in line with the framework of regional parallelism (Yusa'u, 2010). This study has therefore contributed to a better insight into how Nigeria's North/South

dichotomy based on ethnic, religious, political, and geographical differences have permeated media narratives about the Boko Haram conflict.

Despite previous studies (Musa & Yusha'u, 2012; Barkindo et al., 2013; Zenn & Pearson, 2014; Osita-Njoku & Chikere, 2015; and Christian et al., 2015) on the impact of the Boko Haram conflict on the social, political, and economic sectors of the society and how the news media have portrayed the conflict, critical gaps exist on news media representations of women in the conflict. This study is therefore expected to fill in the gap in literature on news media representations of women in the Boko Haram conflict. It is hoped that educational and research institutions such as universities, media researchers, communication scholars, international donor agencies and development partners will find this work valuable. It is expected that this will serve as a springboard that will shape future research on specific issues in relation to media representations of women in conflicts within Nigeria and Africa as a whole. It is also anticipated that findings will serve as reference points on how the news media cover conflicts like the Boko Haram conflict. Understanding how women are represented in the Boko Haram conflict will directly inform policies and programs to tackle the impact of conflicts on women and provide strategies for the active participation of women in curbing them.

This work is similarly expected to generate attention and guide policy makers, development partners, and academics to address specific issues that have affected women and prevented them from realizing their full potentials as peace builders in conflicts like the Boko Haram insurgency. Again, this research is expected to provide the opportunity for specific actions that might be taken to address entrenched socio cultural and traditional stereotypes hindering the progress of women. This work is similarly expected to explore the extent of harmful traditional practices, economic exploitation, sexual abuse and sexual exploitation, and gender-based violence in armed conflicts, which previous studies have not addressed. Through

this study, it is also hoped that scholars can move towards a greater understanding of news media representations of women in conflicts in Northern Nigeria and the dynamics involved.

## **CHAPTER BREAKDOWN**

Chapter two which is the literature review examines conflicts in Nigeria within the context of its geopolitics. It also focuses on media ethics, social responsibility role of the press, development journalism, regional parallelism, agenda setting and intermedia agenda setting roles of the news media. This chapter argues that the Nigerian news media reflect the social, political, regional and religious factors within it operates and suggests that the Boko Haram conflict is a fallout of Nigeria's geopolitics which is dogged by unending conflicts. It also argues that Nigerian news media are constrained by many challenges which are reflected in their representations of women in the Boko Haram conflict. This chapter further argues that the under representations/misrepresentations of women in the conflict reflect their unequalled status in the Nigerian society.

Chapter three examines the origins of the Boko Haram sect, its rise, operations, affiliations, and atrocities against women. This chapter also examines relevant studies conducted to understand the ideology behind the rise of this sect and its impact as portrayed by the Nigerian news media. By doing this, it identifies existing gaps in previous research and examines how these gaps can be filled. This chapter argues that the Boko Haram sect is a product of Nigeria's geopolitics which is dogged by religious, ethnic, and political conflicts alongside underdevelopment and persistent poverty within the conflict region of Northeast Nigeria.

Chapter four presents and discusses the methodology by outlining the methodological approach, the sample size, data collection, framing analysis, coding categories, data analysis, limitations and ethical considerations. This chapter justifies the adoption of the mixed method approach in the study and the major decisions taken in respect of the methodology. It argues

that the choice of the mixed method approach offers a better opportunity for this study to be conducted strictly in line with the rules of a systematic research. This chapter also argues that this methodology provides an in-depth understanding of the Boko Haram conflict by triangulating results from quantitative content analysis and qualitative analysis.

Chapter five examines results from the data analysed, how these results were arrived at and discusses the implications. This chapter argues that the Nigerian news media's representations of women in the Boko Haram conflict reflects patriarchal and gender stereotypes which is one of the major themes identified in the findings.

Chapter six examines the second theme identified from the results of the study which suggests an overreliance on foreign news media. This chapter argues that the Nigerian news media relies on foreign news media as their story sources about the Boko Haram conflict. This demonstrates an inter-media agenda setting role of the news media where elite media from western nations influence Nigerian news media in their representations of the Boko Haram conflict and its effect on women.

Chapter seven examines development journalism and social responsibility roles of the news media against the backdrop of findings from this thesis and argues that the Nigerian news media have attempted to adhere to the tenets of development journalism and be socially responsible despite the numerous individual and institutional challenges they encounter while covering the Boko Haram conflict.

Chapter eight draws conclusion from the various themes identified; summarises the findings as well as the relevant implications and contributions of this research to theory and academic scholarship. This Chapter argues that news media representations of women in the Boko Haram conflict demonstrate patriarchal and gender stereotypes; regional parallelism; and intermedia agenda setting role of foreign news media who exert influence over Nigerian news

media. This is because news media in Nigeria rely on these foreign news media as their major sources of news stories about the conflict.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK/LITERATURE REVIEW**

This chapter examines feminist/media theories in conflicts using postcolonial theories as building blocks. Concepts such as patriarchy, and intersectionality within feminist theories, the roles of news media, and news media representations are discussed in this chapter. This chapter therefore examines post-colonial theories on race and gender within the context and uniqueness of Nigerian media practice such as Edward Said's Orientalism and Spivak Gayatri's studies on the subaltern. Nigerian/Islamic feminism and the intersectionality of gender and the identity of race, gender, ethnicity, age, culture and patriarchy with other forms of oppression also form part of the literature review. The first part of this chapter contextualises the 17-year Boko Haram conflict within the persistent conflicts in Nigeria while dissecting the role Nigeria's geopolitics is playing in the ongoing Boko Haram conflict. To do this, there is the need to briefly unpack and define 'conflict', 'insurgency' and 'Boko Haram conflict'.

#### **CONFLICT**

The Cambridge English Dictionary (2019) defines a conflict as "an active disagreement between people with opposing opinions or principles". Similarly, the Collins English Dictionary (2019) describes a conflict as fighting between countries or groups of people. The Collins English Dictionary (2019) further describes conflict as a protracted struggle or fight. Another definition offered by the Collins English Dictionary refers to a conflict as a "serious difference between two or more beliefs, ideas, or interests. Merriam-Webster dictionaries simply describes conflict as a battle or war.

#### **INSURGENCY**

Bennet (2008) defines insurgency "as an internal military and political struggle by a group to replace a given government with one more to the insurgents' liking" (p. 1). An insurgency is

therefore a struggle between a group of people in power and those not in power who intentionally use political means and violence to destroy or sustain the basis of legitimacy (O'Neill, 2005). In insurgencies, parts of a country are often left with minimal security because of prolonged conflict between government and the insurgents leading to breakdown of law and order (Metz, 2007). Other characteristics of protracted insurgencies are the blossoming of organized crime and corruption while the insurgents control significant amount of territory (Small & Singer, 1982; and Metz, 2007). Metz (2012) argued that “the enduring nature of insurgency includes three core functions: an insurgency must survive, it must strengthen itself, and it must weaken the power structure or state” (p. 81). Metz (2012) also argued that although such insurgencies “are unlikely to attain any decisive victory [without] major outside support; [they] are extremely difficult to defeat and eradicate [...] only managed” (p. 88). Bennet (2008) corroborated this and argued that “once insurgencies become well-established and conflict between insurgents and state governments becomes protracted, resolving the conflict takes many years and is often quite bloody” (p. 1). One of the strategies used by the terrorists is their attempt to destroy the state through sustained attacks on government structures and establishments which are carried out simultaneously (Metz, 2012). Similarly, Metz (2007) also argued that “insurgents can use terrorism as a form of long-range power projection against outsiders who support the government they are fighting” (p. 9). The Boko Haram conflict is therefore an act of insurgency with the group using both political means and violent acts including terrorism to weaken the power of the state and realise its goals.

## **BOKO HARAM CONFLICT**

The Boko Haram conflict is a local conflict in northeast Nigeria which has metamorphosed to an international and multidimensional conflict (Hentz, 2018). The conflict which has raged in intensity for the past 10 years since 2009 is spearheaded by the Jamaat Ahl as-sunnah lid-da'wal-Jihad, ‘the Congregation of the People of Tradition for Proselytism and Jihad generally

known by the Hausa nickname of Boko Haram which literally means ‘Western education is sin’. The conflict is a religious uprising that was reinforced from the political process (Onah, 2014). Onah (2014) argued that “The aims of the group included the establishment of the Sharia as the supreme law of the society; putting an end to political and religious corruption, and abolishing all Western cultural influences, including [...] educational system” (p. 69). Boko Haram’s violence was thus the culmination of the group’s grievances against the Nigerian state and its organs and officials (Sergie & Johnson, 2014). Although the sect was founded in 2002 in north-eastern Nigeria, the conflict gathered momentum in 2009 when, after an altercation with the Nigerian police, Boko Haram launched attacks on police posts and other government installations, killing scores of police officers. With the death of Mohammed Yusuf, the group’s erstwhile leader, his deputy, Abubakar Shekau took over the reins of the leadership with renewed attacks (Yushu’a, 2010; Abubakar, 2012; Walker, 2012; Onah, 2014; Hentz, 2018; and Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2019). The group raided villages, terrorized and murdered civilians with increasing frequency; detonated bombs in large towns and cities; targeted schools, abducted women and girls and forcefully married some while using others as sex slaves. In March 2015, the group pledged allegiance to ISIL, an insurgent group operating primarily in Iraq and Syria, and took the name Islamic State of West Africa (ISWA) (Onah, 2014; Abubakar, 2016; and Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2019). Although the joint task force composed of troops from Nigeria and neighbouring countries had made significant progress against Boko Haram, the attacks continued resulting in more than 1,200 deaths by the end of 2013 (Onah, 2014; and Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2019).

## **CONFLICTS IN NIGERIA**

The most persistent crises in Africa have religious and ethnic undertones leading to conflicts about control of political, economic and social resources. Although violent conflicts remain prevalent and have persisted, the 2017 Global Peace Index shows that the magnitude has



increased steeply since 2010, with about 40 active armed conflicts in places like Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Iraq, Libya, Nigeria, Somalia, Syria and Yemen, with violence and suffering at very high levels (2017 Global Peace Index). The causes of African conflicts are as complex as they are diverse and mostly interconnected. While some scholars attribute these wars to the lingering legacies of colonialism (Mazrui, 1986; Zeleza, 2008; Henderson & Singer, 2000; and Ghanbari, 2011), which have entrenched a culture of suspicion and distrust among its people, others cite ethno-religious, political, economic and social factors (Zeleza, 2008). Mazrui (1986) argues that “while the most lethal of all wars in Africa have been those fought between blacks, the roots of these wars lie in the ‘white legacy’; [...] the seeds of the postcolonial wars themselves lie in the sociological and political mess which ‘white’ colonialism created in Africa” (p. 23). Henderson and Singer (2000) also argue:

Of the political, economic and cultural factors widely assumed to be associated with the onset of civil wars in Africa, results indicate that the lingering impact of colonialism was the most powerful precipitant of civil war (p. 65).

Hovil (2014) interrogates “the one-dimensional description of violence in Africa as ethnic or tribal, and sometimes as sectarian [and argues that] this binary representation of conflicts [does not] allow for an accurate understanding of the multiple complex factors driving a war that was, in fact, between a centralized state and multiple sites of marginalization across the country” (p. 1). The West African sub region is not new to conflicts and is bedevilled by repression, autocratic rule, corruption, and excessive poverty among other calamities. Adebayo and Rashid (2005) argue that “West Africans now live in one of the poorest, most volatile, and most conflict-ridden regions of the world, and its greatest challenge is how to resolve the ongoing violent conflicts, forestall the outbreak of new ones, and develop security structures that can guarantee lasting peace” (p. 1). Nigerians belong to numerous different autonomous ethnic nationalities with about 250 ethnic nationalities of Yoruba, Hausa and Ibos as the

dominant ones and over 400 languages and dialects (CIA World Fact Book, 2016). The British who attempted to join these diverse people and regions in an artificial political entity established boundaries which made the colonies easy to govern but created fault lines for potential conflicts (Ghanbari, 2011; and Ochonu, 2014). Ochonu (2014) argues that “British colonial policy of Indirect Rule [...] made religion and ethnicity the preeminent markers of identity and pushed exclusionary identity politics into the political arena” (p. 1). Ghanbari (2011) also writes that “Nigerian boundaries were not out of physical, cultural, social, religions, economic and environmental homogeneity [they] were conceived mainly as a geographical organization for the administrative convenience of British imperialism” (p. 19). Because of these demarcations, Nigeria has remained sharply divided along regional and religious lines which exist to date and is evident in the persistent ethnic, religious, political and regional crises. The areas now known as Northern Nigeria were embroiled in one conflict or the other before colonialism (Abiola, 1984; Osaghae & Suberu, 2005; International Crisis Group, 2010; and Nmah & Amanambu, 2017) The International Crisis Group (2010) argued:

Beyond migrations and early settlements, the initial interactions were also shaped by wars, slavery, commerce and the spread of Islam. Many states waged wars to expand territorial claims and acquire slaves for working feudal plantations or export to North Africa. The Hausa states allied intermittently but occasionally fought each other; they also suffered invasions, notably by the Borno king, Idris Alooma, in the late sixteenth century (p. 3).

International Crisis Group (2010) also revealed that “at the dawn of the nineteenth century: [...] Shehu Usman dan Fodio, led a jihad [which] overran the [...] then fourteen Hausa states between 1804 and 1808 and replaced their chiefs with Fulani emirs” (p. 3). Milsome (1979) argued that “Usman dan Fodio's jihad was aimed at reviving Islam in Hausa land towards the orthodox line” (p.12). The Hausa rulers were accused by the Fulani jihadists as un-

Islamic in their practices (Milsome, 1979). These arguments confirmed Adeleye's (1971) arguments that it was as a result of similar situations that Muslims were radically hated which triggered the Jihad. The jihad created social division and class system in the area it is occupying and distrust among the southern and northern and by extension, Christians and Muslims (Nmah & Amanambu, 2017). Abiola (1984) also argued that "From all indications it could be seen that far from being purely a religious war, the Sokoto jihad was fought [...] based on religious fanaticism, political adventurism, economic opportunism and of course, tribal parochialism" (pp.109-111). The jihad has inspired many other deadly movements such as Maitatsine and Boko Haram against the Nigerian state (Nmah & Amanambu, 2017).

The history of Nigeria's geopolitics is intrinsically tied to the interaction of colonialism and the spread of Islam. The spread of Islam through Usman Dan Fodio's jihad later extended to South-Western Nigeria. while colonialism was used by European imperialists to conquer and expand its territories while using missionary work as an excuse to 'civilize' a hitherto 'dark' continent. The work of missionaries during colonialism was an integral part of European expansionists' drive and the tenets of the Christian faith were used to justify the actions of the colonialists (Cesaire, 1972; Falola, 2001; and Andrews, 2010). Falola (2001) argued that some missionaries believed that Christianity is like the agenda of colonialism in Africa. Cesaire (1972) also argued that colonization is "neither evangelization, nor a philanthropic enterprise, nor a desire to push back the frontiers of ignorance, disease and tyranny, nor a project undertaken for the greater glory of God, nor an attempt to extend the rule of law" (p. 172). The idea that the colony is inhabited by the primitive other who must be controlled and civilized is the basis on which all ideas of imperial domination and related activities like missionary work are created (Said, 1993). Instead of admitting that it was mainly to exploit, colonialists maintained that the colonized were primitive and in desperate need of civilization (Ramone, 2011) and Christianity was one of the instruments used for this purpose. Sharkey (2013)

however insisted that missionaries played major roles in providing crucial social services such as basic education and health care services to the colonized people. Colonialism and Islam therefore intersected and interacted to make Nigeria what it is today while colonialism flourished under the guise of missionary work.

The first test of Nigeria's unity after independence was the civil war of 1967-1970. The Nigerian civil war popularly referred to as the 'Biafran war' was fought between the government of Nigeria and the secessionist state of Biafra. The conflict was attributed to political, economic, ethnic, cultural and religious tensions which preceded Britain's formal decolonization of Nigeria from 1960 to 1963 (The Inventory of Conflict and Environment, 1970; and Atofarati, 1992). Violence again broke out in 1980-1990 in some states in Northern Nigeria - Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Jigawa, Kaduna, Kano, Katsina, Kebbi, Niger, Sokoto, Yobe and Zamfara with ethno-religious undertones. Religious-related violence and killings are not a new phenomenon especially in the Northern part of the country. Right from the pre-colonial days of migration and Jihad by native Africans and Jihadists (from Sudan), to the National Food Shortage Strike, violence in Plateau State between the Igbos and Hausa migrants in 1945, religious and ethno-political crises have remained part of the Nigerian history (Osaghae & Suberu, 2005).

Two events in Kano, North Central Nigeria signalled the end of the post-civil war peace in Nigeria. The first was the Maitatsine riots of December 1980 in Kano, which claimed thousands of lives and set the tone for subsequent riots involving the sect in other parts of northern Nigeria (Lubeck, 1985). The second event was the destruction of churches and other properties belonging to Christians by Muslim mobs protesting the construction of a church in Kano in October 1982. But the turning point was the ethno-religious conflict in 1987 and 1999 known as the Kafanchan-Kaduna riots, which revived age-old tensions between the Muslim Hausa-Fulani and non-Muslim Christian communities throughout the north and beyond

(Lubeck, 1985). Other major conflicts included the Zangon-kataf riots of 1992, the Tafawa Balewa clashes in 1991, 1995 and 2000, the Kaduna Riots of 2000 and the Jos crises of 2001 in which several hundreds of lives and properties were destroyed (International IDEA, 2000).

Most of the country's numerous and diverse problems are underpinned by the problem of identity. Nigeria's identity crises have either been religious or ethnic. In his study of the impact of religion on identity in Northern Nigeria, Blanco-Mancilla (2002) defines identity as "an ensemble of 'subject positions', e.g. 'Muslim Hausa', 'Christian Female', 'Northern Nigerian', 'Southern Nigerian'; each representing the individual's identification with a group, such as ethnicity, religion, [and] gender" (p. 1). This definition captures the way Nigerians define themselves through attachment to religious and ethnic groups. Religious attachment is a brainchild of attachment theory which is rooted in the infant-mother bond as proposed by Bowlby (1969). The attachment theory is based on the early relationship between an infant and its parents (or primary caregiver) and the dynamics of this relationship throughout the life cycle (Bowlby, 1969). A unique feature of the attachment theory is that the attachment figure serves as a haven of safety in times of danger or threat (Bowlby, 1969). Counted (2017) argued that an attachment-religion connection is developed because of the role played by God as the safe haven and secure base in the absence of the primary caregiver [and] that divine entities, religious figures, or religious objects could be perceived as symbolic attachment caregivers by religious followers who perceive them as sources of support and security. In his study on attachment theory and religious violence, Counted (2017) argued that "the relationship between a religious believer and a religious figure can be explained as an attachment experience [and argued ] that when a religious attachment figure becomes a target of slander, or an action is perpetrated to disrupt the bond with such a figure, the religious believer may be predisposed to defensive, adaptive reactions, in the form of protest, despair, or detachment, to protect their attachment bond and resolve the disruptions that threaten their religious attachment identity"

(p. 88). The fear of losing the attachment bond and identity with a religious figure can cause extreme reactions in some religious believers, as they fight to both defend and protect that which means much to them. Counted (2017) further argued that “People are likely to defend their objects of attachment because their identity is shaped by the(m) [which] is what members of militant religious groups do when they claim allegiance to religious figures that are representations of their symbolic attachments” (p. 90). Religious violence is therefore a defensive response to the fear of losing an attachment bond and the identity developed (Counted, 2017).

Alubo (2009) defines identity as “a combination of socio-cultural characteristics which individuals share, or are presumed to share, with others based on one group may be distinguished from others” (p. 1). This definition is all inclusive as identity is not only limited to the way an individual or a group views itself but also depends on how others view that group or individual. Nigeria has three major religious identities. These are Christianity, Islam and traditional religion. Out of the three religions, adherents of traditional religion are the most politically inactive. Osaghae and Suberu (2005) write that followers of traditional religion are made up of “several hundreds of ethnic groups and sub-groups, villages, clans and kin groups; and [are] involved in the worship of different gods and goddesses” (p. 11). Various studies carried out by Pew Research Centre (2010), National Population Commission, (2008), and Nigerian Afro barometer (2008) show that Nigeria is a country with a very large Christian and Muslim population.

Religion plays a critical role in Nigerian society and is a potent force in the geopolitical development of the country. Agbiboa (2013) argues that “in Nigeria, religion is politicized, and politics is ‘religionized’” (p. 1). The nature of politics in Nigeria is such that when religious crises emerge, they soon dovetail into politics and both become mutually reinforcing (Onah, 2014). Religious conflicts in Nigeria are underpinned by issues that revolve around the desire

by the diverse religious groups to align with people they identify with as belonging to the same faith, beliefs and values. Alger (2002) also argues that “mobilisation of identity has been used to incite political groups to struggle and religious groups to legitimise wars and various modes of brutal and violent acts” (p. 101). Aguwa (1997) similarly argues that “political leaders in Nigeria tend to use religion as an instrument to mobilize the people behind them; [and] also use religious organizations to bring in resources for their political parties” (p. 340). This might partly explain why elective and political appointments have become major spaces where the interplay between religion and politics is fiercely contested. Alubo (2009) also argues that “these contestations result in violence [where] holders of particular identities as defined by the attackers are singled out for liquidation, forced to relocate and their properties torched” (p. 30).

The main forms of inter-religious conflicts in Nigeria are between Muslims and Christians. Inter-religious conflicts in Nigeria form part of the dynamics of identity politics. The violence that has dotted the history of Nigeria's return to civil rule underlines the potent, and often destructive, role of religion in the politics and identity of Nigeria (Falola, 1999). Each region of Nigeria comprises ethnic and religious minorities who hold grudges against groups they view as having hegemonic power over them. These grievances are sometimes expressed through bitter sectarian crises and violent clashes which are often fanned by political elites and interest groups. In politics for instance, there is the constant fear by Christians that Muslim hegemonic dominance of the political space would be used to Islamize Nigeria. Similarly, Muslims, especially those from Northern Nigeria, have always complained against what they regard as the ‘overly close’ relationship between Christians, particularly their leaders, with the Western world (Ghanbari, 2011; and Ochonu, 2014). This was evident in Nigerian civil war of 1967-70; Maitatsine uprising of Kano in 1980; Kafanchan/Kaduna religious riots of 1987; Tafawa Balewa clashes in 1991, 1995 and 2000; Kaduna riots of 2000; and Jos crisis of 2001 (Aguwa, 1997; Falola, 1999; Alger, 2002; and Alubo, 2009).

Another feature of religious identity as a precursor to violence in Nigeria are the roles played by some of the organizations championing the cause of their religions. For example, the major champions of Islam in Nigeria - the Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs and the *Jam'atu Nasril Islam* (JNI) - have demanded that all Judeo-Christian symbols should be removed from schools and courts; while the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) wanted the Nigerian government to distance itself from Islam (Ilesanmi, 2001; Meredith, 2005; and Osaghae & Suberu 2005). These demands later led to pockets of violence in some states with hundreds of lives and properties lost throughout 1980. Another example is the agitation within the Muslim community in relation to the institutionalization of the Sharia legal code in Muslim-dominated states. Meredith (2005) argues that Muslims in the country “used Sharia as a weapon to reassert northern solidarity” (p. 10). The agitations succeeded when 12 Northern states implemented Sharia and established the hizbah groups to enforce the Sharia legal code between 1999 and 2000. Meredith (2005) argues that the implementation of the code was received with fears by non-Muslims who saw the move as a prelude to the formation of an Islamic state. In response to this, some Christian leaders under the umbrella of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) also campaigned for the implementation of Canon Law in largely Christian dominated states.

Nigerians have also been identified along their ethnicity. This is because most Nigerians tend to define themselves in terms of ethnic affinities as opposed to other identities (Osaghae & Suberu, 2005). Northern Nigeria is currently divided into 19 states with three geopolitical blocs of North Central, North East and North West which is largely Muslim. The South has 17 states divided into three geopolitical units of South South, South-East and South West. It is largely Christian. Ghanbari (2011) writes that “this history helps account for the dichotomy between North and South and the divisions in the North that have been so pronounced” (p. 11). Canci and Odukoya (2016) argue that “although there are over 400 languages in Nigeria [with]



only three [...] considered important, [...] the distribution of these languages is directly proportional to both political and socio-economic power, and therefore the language group to which one belongs defines his/her status in the society” (p.1). Tobechukwu (2007) also argues that “the different ethnic groups in Nigeria have their unique peculiarities, idiosyncrasies, and different linguistic and cultural patterns” (p. 69). Although the number of Nigeria’s ethnic groupings remains contestable despite studies by Lewis and Bratton 2000; Okpanachi 2010; and Central Intelligence Agency 2016, the seven largest ethnic groups constituting about 88% of the country’s population are Hausa and Fulani (29%), Yoruba (21%), Igbo (18%), Ijaw (10%), Kanuri (4%), Ibibio (3.5%), and Tiv (2,5%) (Central Intelligence Agency, 2016). Ette (2013) argues that “politicians are perceived to be representing their own ethnic groups and competing for access to the spoils of office, [...] in the absence of a strong sense of national identity, ethnic rivalry has become a driving force in political competition” (p. 113).

Canci and Odukoya (2016) explained that “this population disproportion when combined with the disparities in the political influence of individual ethnic groups roughly classifies the Nigerian population into two major groupings: the majority and minority ethnic groups” (p. 1). This grouping is divided along the Hausa-Fulani, the Yoruba and the Igbo who are categorised as the majority while the rest of the ethnic groups are fitted into the minority group with each having and assigning different degrees of status relative to their size and political influence (Rakov, 1990; and Okpanachi, 2010). Identity based on ethnicity has played a major factor in the country’s conflicts during the colonial and post-colonial era. The ‘us’ versus ‘them’ dichotomy played out during the colonial period and continued in post-colonial Nigeria. The Muslims versus Christians, Northerners versus Southerners, Hausa-Fulani versus Yoruba or Igbo were major distinguishing identities between these ethnic groups (Adefemi, 2010; and Okpanachi, 2010). Lewis and Bratton (2000) argued that “almost half of Nigerians (48.2%) labelled themselves with an ethnic identity compared to 28.4% who labelled

themselves with respect to class and 21% who identified with a religious group” (p. 27). The Hausa-Fulani and other smaller ethnic groups that inhabit the North are mostly Muslims; the Igbos and other smaller groups residing in the South are predominantly Christians; the ethnic groups in the middle (Middle Belt) comprise a mixture of Christians and Muslims; while the Yoruba found in the Southwest are half Muslims and half Christians. This Muslim North and Christian South cleavages have fuelled divisions along ethnic lines in Nigeria.

Since the restoration of democratic rule in 1999, ethnic identity and mobilisation in the Nigerian political landscape have often resulted in political instability and constant conflicts. For instance, in Nigeria the ethnic factor is seen when political parties are formed and during elections. In the first republic, the Northern People’s Congress (NPC) was formed by predominantly the Hausa-Fulani; the National Council of Nigeria and Cameroon (NCNC) by the Igbos; and the Action Group (AG) was formed by the Yoruba. These parties later metamorphosed into the National Party of Nigeria (NPN), the Nigerian Peoples Party (NPP) and the Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN) in the second republic. In the third republic, the Social Democratic Party (SDP) and National Republican Convention (NRC) were also formed along ethnic nationalities (Edoh, 2001). In Nigeria’s politics of ethnic identity, fierce competition for supremacy exists among the country’s three largest groups – the Hausa-Fulani, the Yoruba and the Igbo often exhibited by violent conflicts. The minority groups comprising over 250 smaller ethnic groups have often been regarded as inconsequential in political contests.

Closely related to this is what some analysts refer to as selfishness of the political class and the elites (Edoh, 2001; Adefemi, 2010; and Okpanachi, 2010). Zeleza (2008) argues that “who belongs and does not belong to the polity [...] remains at the heart of many conflicts in postcolonial Africa” (p. 16). Tied to this is Nigeria’s semi-democratic state. Various definitions of what a democracy is have been offered. The Collins English Dictionary (2019) defines democracy as “a system of government in which people choose their rulers by voting for them

in elections”. Merriam-Webster Dictionary (2019) also defines democracy as “a government in which the supreme power is vested in the people and exercised by them directly or indirectly through a system of representation usually involving periodically held free elections”. Similarly, the Oxford dictionaries (2019) defines democracy as “a system of government by the whole population or all the eligible members of a state, typically through elected representatives [and a] political system that is run and controlled by citizens of the country”. A country is said to be a democracy if majority of its citizens elect representatives that will govern on their behalf. Based on the above definitions, Nigeria is said to be a democracy but even the structures and institutions that plan, monitor and conduct elections that usher in these representatives like the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) are bedevilled by numerous challenges.

Henderson and Singer (2000) argue that “full-fledged democracies are less prone to large-scale domestic conflicts due to the availability of legitimate channels for dispute resolution while [...] Semi-democracies are more prone to civil war because they have neither the range of legitimate institutionalized channels found in full-fledged democracies nor the expansive repressive machinery of full-fledged autocracies to deter insurgency” (p. 5). Nigeria’s semi-democratic has thrown the country into several civil conflicts since 1984 which are often carried out between militant groups and ethnic apologists. These militant groups have often unleashed violence against rival groups and other perceived enemies. While the Odua Peoples’ Congress (OPC) and Afenifere socio-political group defends the South-west, the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) and Bakassi Boys alongside other militant groups defend the South South, the Movement for the Actualization of Biafra (MASSOB) and the Ohaneze Ndi Igbo the South-east. The North operates under the umbrella body of Arewa Consultative Forum (ACF) and the Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association among other groups. There is no doubt that the interplay of the desire of Nigerians to carve

their ethnic and religious identities have led to the myriad conflicts that the country has experienced and is still embroiled in. Ethnic and religious identities by the diverse groups have fuelled some of the bloodiest conflicts Nigeria has witnessed since independence. About 11,000 deaths were recorded between 1999 and 2013 due to communal and ethnic violence in almost all the regions of Nigeria with frequency in the Niger Delta, the Muslim North, and along the Middle-belt (Uzodike & Whetho, 2011). As Hovil (2014) argues, conflicts in the African continent cannot be reduced to binary explanations as ethnic or religious or between the North and South alone. There are other predisposing factors which are not only diverse but take different forms.

Another major cause of conflicts in Nigeria therefore is the nature of its geopolitics. Nigeria's geopolitics is dominated by the spread of Christianity and Islam, the transatlantic slave trade, colonialism, independence, the incursion of the military into politics and governance, civil unrest, religious riots and insurgency. These factors have contributed in making Nigeria what it is today - a rancorous and fractious nation sharply divided along regional, religious, ethnic and political lines (Soludo, 2007; Ghanbari, 2011; Samu, 2012; and Ochonu, 2014). Ghanbari (2011) argues that "this history helps account for the dichotomy between North and South and the divisions in the North that have been so pronounced" (p. 11). Nigeria is presently made up of thirty-six states and the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. Aka (1995) also argues that "the creation of states has not solved the nation's socio-economic disparities, regional inequalities, inter-ethnic rivalries and political problems" (p. 75). This is mainly because the agitations for the creation of states were fought along ethnic and religious undertones.

Similarly, the transatlantic slave trade had a profound influence on virtually all parts of Nigeria (Ghanbari, 2011). The spread of Islam and Christianity was associated with slavery and efforts to promote political and cultural autonomy of the people covering the areas known

as Nigeria (Ghanbari, 2011). Although reasons for this invasion have been contested, economic gains and territorial expansion of the colonialists were not far-fetched. The area known as present day Nigeria was amalgamated in 1914 by the British into southern and northern protectorates. The British attempted to join diverse people and regions in an artificial political entity without considerations to existing geographical location and political entities. Ramone (2011) argues that “neither cultural or linguistic groups nor natural geographical markers such as rivers or mountain ranges were taken into consideration during this process” (p. 3). Although these divisions made the colonies easy to govern for the British colonialists, it created conditions for potential conflicts. Ochonu (2014) argues that “British colonial policy of Indirect Rule [...] made religion and ethnicity the preeminent markers of identity and pushed exclusionary identity politics into the political arena” (p. 1). Ghanbari (2011) also argues that “Nigerian boundaries were not out of physical, cultural, social, religions, economic and environmental homogeneity [they] were conceived mainly as a geographical organization for the administrative convenience of British imperialism” (p. 19).

Because of this demarcation, Nigeria has remained sharply divided along regional and religious lines which exists to date and are evident in the persistent ethnic, religious, political and regional crises. This division was also evident in the struggle for independence. This struggle began in 1947 and was spearheaded by nationalists from different regional, ethnic, and religious communities who came together to negotiate the transition to self-determination and to map out a common future. It was however overshadowed by the regional interests of these nationalists. Ochonu (2014) argues that “despite interactions [by these nationalists], the jarring effects of arbitrary colonial unification manifested as seemingly irreconcilable differences of aspirations, priorities, and visions” (p. 1). Dr. Nnamdi Azikwe was therefore accused of championing the cause of the Igbos from the South East, Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa for the

Hausas in the North while Chief Obafemi Awolowo was accused of fighting for the self-determination of the Yoruba in the South West.

Corruption and incompetent leadership have also contributed immensely to Nigeria's crises and underdevelopment. Global anti-corruption watchdog Transparency International (TI) (2017) has ranked Nigeria 148th out of 180 countries in its 2017 Corruption Perception Index with a score of 28 out of 100, a figure lower than the average in the Sub-Saharan region. Closely tied to this is the mismanagement of resources. Ghanbari (2011) argued that "mismanagement of national resources and misrule by multi-ethnic and multi-religious coalitions of successive rulers since independence have impoverished and denied opportunities to most Nigerians" (p. 20). Conflicts in Nigeria have also been attributed to international conspiracy theories (Zezeza, 2008). The activities of some multinational oil companies such as Shell, AGIP and British Petroleum in the volatile Niger Delta region also known as South South Nigeria and the resultant violent agitations of the indigenes are some classic cases of 'resource control' (Collier, 2000). Samu (2000) explains that in the Niger Delta, demands for resource control and wrangling over traditional authority and land ownership have led to bloodbath and destruction of property.

Again, Nigeria's regular regime changes are major conflicts triggers. Factors responsible for these have been identified by (Ghanbari, 2011; and Ette, 2013) as civil and ethnic strife coupled with corruption and dissatisfaction with political elites which have spanned over 50 years since independence. Nigeria has undergone leadership transition from bloody, bloodless to peaceful regime changes since becoming a nation state in 1960. The incursion of the military into the democratic space in Nigeria has also not helped matters. The political history of Nigeria has been dominated by this involvement. Ette (2013) argues that "anti-democratic behaviour and years of military rule had ended democratic values and entrenched an authoritarian understanding of politics" (p. 107). So far, the country has

experienced six successful military coups, six civilian Presidents and one Head of Interim Government. Although Nigeria is in its Fourth Republic, attempts at entrenching democracy have been tainted by massive rigging, ballot box snatching and destruction, bribing of electoral officials and electorates as well as violence on a large scale. Ette (2013) argues:

More than a decade after a successful transition program, unstable democratic structures, limited knowledge and experience of democratic procedures and values, and a polarised polity are still posing challenges to the consolidation of Nigerian democracy (p. 107).

As indicated earlier, Nigerian politics have always been marked by divisions along ethnic, religious and regional cleavages which was evident during the 2011 and the 2015 presidential elections where the rights of the then former President, Goodluck Jonathan, a Christian from the South, to contest the elections was bitterly contested by Muslim politicians from the North. Because of this, Nigeria was almost torn apart by these two groups who laid claims to the presidency before, during and after the elections as series of violence ensued with many lives and properties lost. The 2015 general elections marked a watershed in Nigeria's quest for a free, fair and peaceful elections with the election of a former military leader, General Muhammadu Buhari as Nigeria's president for four years. Although, the country's political landscape has considerably changed with apparent characteristics of democratic consolidation (Ette, 2013), Nigeria's divisiveness along ethnic, political, religious and regional lines have also played out in the Nigerian news media. In Nigeria therefore, some news stories that might be perceived as negative to a region are either ignored or watered down by the news media because of their geographical locations, political leanings and ethnic inclinations. On the other hand, news stories that might disadvantage other regions are celebrated all over the pages of newspapers and vice versa. (Yusha'u, 2010).

One of the major conflicts that is threatening the very foundation of Nigeria as a nation state is the ongoing Boko Haram conflict in North East Nigeria. Amnesty International (2016/17) Reports estimate that the Boko Haram conflict has affected 14.8 million people. The reports also reveal that there are about 2 million Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) in Northern Nigeria with 80% of them living in host communities, while others remained in overcrowded camps with inadequate access to food, clean water and sanitation (Amnesty International Report, 2016/2017). Similarly, the International Organization for Migration (IOM, 2017) reports that an estimated 1.57 million people are still internally displaced across the three North East states of Adamawa, Borno and Yobe, of whom 85 per cent are in Borno alone. Children represent 56 per cent of the total Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) population. The report also estimates that Northeast Nigeria is one of four countries and regions facing famine, with up to 450,000 children at risk of severe acute malnutrition this year because of the violence.

Also, the United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF, 2017) estimates that “about 3 million children need emergency education support in the North-East due to the Boko Haram insurgency. Amnesty International (2016/17) further reveals that “in the inaccessible territories in Borno state, tens of thousands (IDPs) were held in camps under armed guards by the Nigerian military and the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF); [...] who were accused of sexually exploiting women in the IDP camps in exchange for money or food, or for allowing them to leave the camps” (p. 20). The Amnesty International Report also reveals that at the Giwa barracks detention camp alone, children under five were detained in three overcrowded and unsanitary women’s cells, alongside at least 250 women and teenage girls per cell. Again, UNICEF’s Report (2017) estimates that “since 1 January 2017, of the 83 children used as ‘human bombs’; 55 were girls, most often under 15 years old” (p. 1). Amnesty International (2016/17) also condemns the “appalling increase in the cruel and calculated use of children, especially girls, as ‘human bombs’ in Northeast Nigeria” (p. 1).



From the statistics provided, the Boko Haram conflict has again highlighted the extent of the discriminated position of women in the North east. For example, the law against rape which owes its basis to Nigeria's culture and religious antecedents as provided in the Penal Code of Northern Nigeria as amended provides that the testimony given by men in any sharia law court carries more weight than that provided by a woman giving evidence in the same case (Ekhatior, 2015). Ekhatior (2015) describes this provision as "archaic and an example of state sanctioned brutality against women [...] skewed to the advantage of the male sex" (p. 289). With the large casualty from conflicts, women have continued to be worst affected by the Boko Haram conflict.

The Boko Haram conflict is a fallout and brainchild of Nigeria's persistent crises caused by various factors from ethno-religious to fight over control of political, economic and social resources; and fed by the lingering legacies of colonialism (Mazrui, 1986). This is also tied to Nigeria's geopolitics, the spread of Islam and Christianity; Nigeria's identity crises; the transatlantic slave trade; and the incursion of the military into politics and governance. The list is by no means exhaustive. These factors have contributed in making Nigeria what it is today - a rancorous and fractious nation sharply divided along regional, religious, ethnic and political lines (Soludo, 2007; Ghanbari, 2011; Samu, 2012; and Ochon, 2014). One of the major conflicts that has defied solution so far and is threatening the very foundation of Nigeria as a nation state is the on-going 17-year old Boko Haram conflict in North East Nigeria which has consumed hundreds of lives and properties worth millions. Among victims of this conflict are women who have not only been abducted, forcefully married, sexually abused, lost their breadwinners and source of livelihood, but many have lost their lives. To conduct this study, this chapter will also examine theories of feminism and the media using some postcolonial theories as building blocks.

## **THEORIES**

This research draws on postcolonial theories to understand the relationship between feminism and news media in Nigeria. The relationship between media and conflict has been investigated by scholars like Alat (2006), Eti (2012), and Ette (2013). Nigeria's colonial antecedents have impacted on gender relations and how women and issues that affect them are treated (Harrison et al., 2008). Harrison et al. (2008) argued that "although women in pre-colonial eras (sic) suffered various forms of discrimination, colonialism intensified and introduced new forms of discrimination against [them]" (p. 199). This section, therefore, examines post-colonial theories on race, gender, class, and status within the context of Nigerian news media's representations of women.

## **POSTCOLONIAL THEORIES**

Any research about gender, media and conflict in Nigeria cannot be complete without looking at their relationship with colonialism. McClintock (1992) argues:

The continuing weight of male economic self-interest and the varied undertows of patriarchal Christianity, Confucianism, and Islamic fundamentalism continue to legitimize women's barred access to the corridors of political and economic power [and] their persistent educational disadvantage, [...] these male policies, while deeply implicated in colonialism, are not reducible to colonialism, and cannot be understood without distinct theories of gender (p. 84 & p. 98).

Building on McClintock (1992), this section explores Edward Said's (1978) postulations on Orientalism and Gayatri Spivak's (1988) studies on the Subaltern. Colonialism is one of the factors that have influenced and shaped news media operations and practice like other sectors in Nigeria. While some scholars situate colonialism within the culture of the conquered people (Nayar, 2010), others examined colonialism in relation to its economic

implications (Loomba, 1998). Nayar (2010) described the cultural impact of colonialism on the natives as “a cultural conquest of the native whereby the native’s forms of knowledge, art, cultural practices and religious beliefs were studied, classified, policed, judged and altered by Europeans” (pp. 1-2). Ramone (2011) similarly explained that the perpetrators of colonialism lay claim to their superiority, and that Europe is not only culturally and intellectually superior to the peoples of the conquered territories but is also ahead in terms of evolution. Some historians like Thornton, (1992) laid the blame on the colonized peoples and argued that they were responsible for their plight even before colonialism. Thornton (1992) cited continents like Africa where more powerful people exercised hegemonic control over weaker groups and neighbours through conquests. Thornton (1992 cited in Wehrs, 2008) argued that “Africans were the makers of their own histories and perfectly capable of interacting among themselves in ways that had little to do with Western influence or power” (pp. 2 & 4).

This relationship of domination has continued to this day in the form of ‘modern colonialism’. After independence, the exploitation of former colonies by western powers continued in the form of trade, commerce, education and industrialization among others. Turner (2006) who referred to this exploitation as modern colonialism and described it as “a fundamental inequality between metropole and colony, often codified in law, and resulting in a basic dependence of the colony on the metropolitan power” (p. 79). Modern colonialism can be found in African countries today with the incorporation of the western way of governance, law, religion, education, and culture. Although the end of colonialism is a time of liberation from years of oppression, newly independent colonial subjects however realised that the colonial past has continued to exert a negative influence (Wilkins, 2018). Loomba (1998) argued that “a country may be both postcolonial (in the sense of being formally independent) and neo-colonial (in the sense of remaining economically and/or culturally dependent) at the same time” (p. 12). With the emergence of newly independent nations, their hopes became

short-lived as the degree to which Western powers have not relinquished their power became clear (Ramon, 2011).

Europe therefore continued its domination after independence through other methods, some subtle, some not so subtle. In response to this domination anti-colonial resistance took various forms and were spearheaded by some African nationalists like Leopold Sedar Senghor of Senegal, Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana and Chinue Achebe of Nigeria who used various forms of cultural resistance to keep the fire of nationalism burning in their various countries. For instance, Achebe used his literary works to fight ‘injustice’ in the system while Leopold Sedar Senghor used the concept of negritude to canvass for a return and celebration of African values. This thesis builds on the works of Edward Said (1978) on Orientalism and Gayatri Spivak (1988) on the Subaltern to examine post-colonial theories on race and gender within the context and uniqueness of Nigerian media practice and their relationship to the Boko Haram conflict.

## **EDWARD SAID’S ORIENTALISM**

Said’s Orientalism and the concept of othering provides a theoretical framework for understanding the status of the African/Nigerian woman, and the discrimination she faces daily. Said (1978) drew on the works of Foucault, Adorno, and Gramsci, and argued that European scholars took a vast region, with different cultures and from diverse countries including most of Asia as well as the Middle East and constructed it as singular unit, the ‘Orient’. Said (1978) argued that “the writings of these Europeans expressed a will not only to understand what [was] non-European, but also to control and manipulate what was manifestly different” (p. 288).

Building on Foucault’s conceptualization of discourse, Said (1978) offers an analysis of how hegemonic discourses within and beyond academia have created an inferior other, the ‘Oriental’, in opposition to a modern, rational, and superior Europe and North America ‘the Occident’. This relationship of power is repeated through the different institutions and cultural productions of the West, which constructs a suitable ‘Orient’ that confirms Eurocentric

narratives of superiority (Wilken, 2018). Explaining about the relationship between the Orient and the Occident, i.e. the developed North and the underdeveloped South, Said (1993) argues:

The other is set up within a straightforward oppositional relationship between ‘us’ and ‘them, in which force is used to control the unruly others because ‘they’ mainly understood force or violence best; ‘they’ were not like ‘us’ and for that reason deserved to be ruled (pp. xi-xii, 8).

Orientalism represents an image of an Oriental who is culturally backward, peculiar, and unchanging (Said, 1978). This unequal and binary relationship persists today in the form of what Turner (2006) refers to as ‘modern colonialism’ where there is fundamental inequality between colonizers and their former colonies resulting in overdependence of these colonies on their former colonial masters. This inequality could be in the form of trade, industrialization, governance, education and the news media. This is more pervasive in Nigeria where despite advancement in the media industry, overdependence exists in technology and content. Said (1978) refers to this relationship as ‘Otherness’ in his writing on Orientalism. Africa in the Western press is represented as a homogenous entity and an undifferentiated ‘country’ and representative of the entire continent comprising uncivilized and heathen peoples who are culturally, intellectually, politically, and technically backward or inferior. Masmoudi (1979) accuses the media in the developed countries, particularly the West of been indifferent to the problems of developing nations and argues that traces of the colonial era can be found in the news media of developing nations:

It enshrines a form of political, economic and cultural colonialism which is reflected in the often-tendentious interpretation of news concerning the developing countries. This consists in highlighting events whose significance, in certain cases, is limited or even non-existent; in collecting isolated facts and presenting them as a ‘whole’; in setting

out facts in such a way that the conclusion to be drawn from them is necessarily favourable to the interests of the countries of origin of these media (p. 174).

Studies (Said, 1978; Moeller, 1999; and Franks, 2005) confirmed Western news media's underrepresentation/misrepresentation of the African continent and its people. Stories about the continent are also replete with colonial sentiments of the 'us' and 'them' dichotomy as enunciated by Said (1978). Said laid the foundation upon which representations of the African continent and other developing continents by Western media can be situated. Drawing on Said's argument that the Orient and by extension Africans were always the weaker partners of the much more advanced developed countries of the West, Franks (2005) explained that the Western media represent Africa in a biased and stereotypical way. In a study of foreign news reporting, Galtung and Ruge (1970) found that "organizational and social-cultural factors [have led] to a predominance of news in 'northern' news media which was implicitly negative towards the third world-tending to portray it as unstable, undemocratic and disaster-prone" (p. 262). Eurocentrism by western news media has been identified as one of the norms that influence the production of news. Wolfsfeld (2004) argued that "even at the best of times in its representations of Africa, Western media coverage is loaded with Eurocentric stereotypes [...] news stories are almost always about 'us', about what is happening or could happen to 'us'; when there is news about 'others', it centres on how they affect us" (p. 22).

Achebe (2009) singled out what he referred to as "lurid and degrading stereotypes" (p. 210) of Africa which have been inherited in every sphere of life including journalism. A major source of concern about this negative portrayal is that if the African news media replicate stories from western news media who are alleged to be 'Eurocentric' and their news reports about the continent fraught with negative stereotypes, it follows therefore that these replicated stories will probably lack context and might possibly be filled with inaccuracies about the conflict. Musa and Yusha'u (2013) explained that most foreign news reports about conflicts in

Africa lack context as they raise credibility issues because foreign reporters' access to local news sources and their understanding of the topography is limited, which invariably affects how the story is written.

Scholars like Ramone (2011), Loomba (1998) and Ahmad (1993) have criticised Said's notion of the 'other' as too simplistic and restrictive about the relationship between 'white Western Colonizers and non-white, non-European colonized'. They similarly criticised Said for constructing the West as a homogeneous unit instead of a collection of diverse and different nation states. Loomba (1998) argued that Said's emphasis on "imperialist discourses and their positioning of colonial peoples, [neglected] the way in which these peoples received, contributed to, modified, or challenged such discourses" (p. 193). These scholars accused Said of neglecting to highlight the part Africa played in creating its own problems. Ahmad (1993) also argued:

Orientalism [...] panders to the most sentimental, the most extreme forms of Third-Worldist nationalism; [...] the book says nothing, of course, about any fault of our own; [...] the bloodbath we conducted at the time of Partition; [...] simply pales in comparison with this other power which has victimized us and inferiorized us (p. 165).

Said's orientalism can be understood within the context of constructing the woman, especially the African woman, as the 'other'. Butler (1999) re-echoed Said's exposition on the concept of the 'primitive other' and condemned 'universal patriarchy' for its inability to "account for the workings of gender oppression in the concrete cultural contexts in which it exists" (p. 6). Beauvoir (2005) also argued that the "constructions of gender treat masculinity as a positive norm and femininity as a deviation from the masculine ideal-thus making women the 'other' or the second sex" (p. 9). Drawing on Said's (1979) work, Geertsema (2009) similarly argued that "representations become more complicated when they cross national boundaries, [...] very little is reported on the lives of women in the limited space dedicated to

international affairs; [arguing that] when women are represented in international news, ‘othering’ frequently occurs” (pp. 149 & 172). The concept of ‘othering’ of the woman can be examined in Nigeria’s news media’s narratives about women and issues that affect them. The underrepresentations of women in the news media can be likened to the concept of ‘othering’ as championed by Said (1978).

### **GAYATRI SPIVAK AND SUBALTERNITY**

Gayatri Spivak’s (1988) studies on widow immolation in India and her findings on the subaltern subject formed the fulcrum within which social scientists, particularly scholars of feminism conceptualise their studies on gender relations and female discrimination. Spivak’s (1988) famous question ‘Can the subaltern speak, identified the subaltern figure as the ‘subsistence farmers, unorganized peasant labour, the tribals, and the communities of zero workers on the street or in the countryside’” (p. 288). Spivak (1993) argued that “women are, doubly silenced, as they are subject to violence within the family home, and they have to perform physical labour outdoors and in public while their religious leaders insist that the female body should be hidden away” (p. 288). Spivak (1988) explained that the absence of the woman in colonial discourse is an indication of the difficulty in recovering her voice and an indication that the woman does not have a platform to speak.

These findings by Spivak highlight the power patriarchy holds and wields over the female gender during colonial times, which subsists to modern times. Not only is the African woman constrained by patriarchy but remains within the constructs of colonialism and Western definitions of who she is (Nayar 2010). The disadvantaged position of women is more evident during conflicts where they are subjected to all forms of violence (UN 2002 Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace, and Security; and Al-Gasser et al., 2004). Despite these atrocities, women do not have a voice to articulate what they are going through especially in developing countries such as Nigeria (Alawemo & Muterera, 2013). It could however be



argued that some women played active roles during pre-colonial and colonial times in Nigeria like Queen Amina of Zazzau, Funmilayo Ransome Kuti, Margaret Ekpo, and Gambo Sawaba.

Queen Amina who as a warrior, exerted tremendous influence on Northern Nigeria. She lived approximately 200 years prior to the establishment of the Sokoto caliphate that governed northern Nigeria during British colonial rule and personally led the cavalry of Zazzau through series of military campaigns and was credited as the architect who created the strong earthen walls around Zaria city, which has become the model for the fortifications used in all Hausa states (Ajayi & Crowder, 1971). Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti (1900-1978) was an educator, activist, and one of the leading advocates of women's rights in Nigeria. She successfully fought against injustice and the exploitation of market women, which led to the eradication of a separate tax rate for women. Ransome Kuti campaigned for and ensured that women's votes counted during elections (Ward, 2013). Margaret Ekpo (1914-2006) was also a human rights activist, a feminist, a social crusader and mobiliser and one of the pioneer female politicians in Nigeria's First Republic. Ekpo fought for Nigeria's independence and demanded economic and political equality of women. In 1961, Ekpo won a seat in the Eastern Regional House of Assembly and used her position to continue to fight for issues affecting women. Gambo Sawaba (1933-2001) was another renowned woman who spearheaded the struggle for political and social rights for women in a society steeped in tradition, culture and religion with strong gender stereotypes and patriarchal sentimentalities. She was a political activist who fought colonialism, injustice and repression from the British and her male counterparts (Nmah, 1982) in Northern Nigeria.

Women have also revolted against British colonial policies (Mba, 1982). For instance, the Aba Market Women's riots of 1929 against policies imposed by British colonial administrators were seen in nationalist circles as the first major challenge to British authority in Nigeria and West Africa during the colonial period (Rennebohm, 2011). For instance, Igbo

and Ibibio women in the provinces of Calabar and Owerri, south east Nigeria in 1929 came out in their thousands to revolt against policies imposed by British colonial administrators which later spread to other parts of the region. These women had at one time or the other influenced and shaken the very fabric of Nigeria's patriarchal foundation during British colonial rule and agitations for independence. Accounts by (Okome 2002; Ajayi, 2007; and Para Mallam, 2010) have it that these women exerted their influence within the colonial setting and found their voices in political discourse of their time.

Along colonialism, a new form of discrimination and marginalization of women found expression in regions that hitherto have given women a certain degree of freedom and the voice to articulate their needs and aspirations. Okome (2002) argues that "most of the administrative practices which prevent equal treatment of Nigerian men and women are products of colonial laws and government; men as a group were able to benefit from the Victorian sensibilities of the colonialists [which situates] men and women differently in social, political and economic relations" (p. 39). Omotola (2007) also argues that "certain historical legacies of gender inequality in Nigeria fed by colonialism have advantaged patriarchy" (p. 34). Women in colonial and post-colonial Nigeria remained constrained within patriarchal domination and oppression with the intersectionality of gender and social structures like race, ethnicity, age and class relations which have permeated the Nigerian news media. Therefore, like the colonial female subject in Spivak's (1988) study of the subaltern, the Nigerian woman remains 'doubly silenced' by her family and the society.

## **THEORIES OF FEMINISM**

The oppression of women is all pervasive even though differences can be identified within different societies. Cudd and Andreasen (2005) argue that "women are dominated not only politically and economically, but also sexually, physically, and in nearly every field of artistic or intellectual endeavour and philosophical thought" (p. 7). Millet (2005) also argues that

gender is the primary source of identity in modern societies with people reacting to others first as men and women rather than in terms of their class membership. Discrimination against women is universal when it comes to violence. This study draws on feminist theories which attribute violence against women to male-dominated social structures and the socialization practices that teach gender-specific roles for men and women. This approach states that violence exists as part of patriarchal social structures and is an intentional pattern of behaviour utilized to establish and maintain power and control. Such analyses have evaluated gender-based violence in relation to socio-cultural and socio-political systems (Radford & Stanko, 1996; Moser & Clark, 2001; Cockburn, 2001; and hooks, 2005).

Explaining why violence against women occurs, Kelly and Radford (1998) argued that “the range of violence experienced by women is not ‘mutually exclusive’; [and] may be experienced in a range of locations, contexts and relationships and throughout different phases of their life-cycle” (pp. 57-58). Other analyses have evaluated gender-based violence in relation to socio-cultural and socio-political systems. In line with this, Radford and Stanko (1996) argued that violence is the “backdrop against which women’s lives are lived” (p. 78). hooks (2005) also argued that, “women who are most victimized by sexist oppression; women who are daily beaten down, mentally, physically, and spiritually-women who are powerless to change their position in life; [...] are a silent majority; [...] a mark of their victimization is that they accept their lot in life without visible question, without organized protest, without collective anger or rage” (p. 60). Moser and Clark (2001) similarly argued that “violence is [understood as being] concerned with power [and] embodies the power imbalances inherent in patriarchal society” (p. 6). Inequality is a precursor to violence which gives it legitimacy (Cockburn, 2001).

Feminists’ agitations that sprung up because of discriminatory and oppressive practices were mostly underpinned by Marxist, radical and liberal ideas. Davis et al., (1991) argued that

Marxist analysis by radical feminists focuses on “sex-class system; [while] socialist feminists [centre] on the (inter)relationships of reproduction and production-or ‘capitalist’ patriarchy” (p. 44). At the heart of radical feminism is the assumption that, men are responsible for and benefit from the abuse and exploitation of women. Patriarchy and the systematic domination of women by men is a central concern and is seen as the root cause of violence against women in society. At the core of contemporary feminism is the issue of women’s reproductive problems (Humm, 1992). Female theorists (Radford & Stanko, 1996; Moser & Clark, 2001; Cockburn, 2001; hooks, 2005; and Cudd & Andreasen, 2005) focused attention on gender identity and its connection to the causes of rape and violence.

Another theory that has influenced and shaped feminism is Gramsci’s notion of hegemony which postulates that domination is achieved by a willing subject who submits to the ruling class and not necessarily through force or coercion alone (Gramsci 1971). Dominick (2009) argues that “groups with political and economic power extend their influence over those groups who are powerless or at the margins of society” (p. 47). Ramone (2011) also describes hegemony as “a kind of power which allows the dominant to retain control, while encouraging the less powerful [...] to accept an unequal system” (p. 12). In Nigeria, for instance, men hold hegemonic influence over women and important decisions in the family are decided by them (Ajayi, 2007; Para Mallam, 2010; and Koziel, 2014). Sandoval (2003) identifies four stages in the feminist history of awareness. They include liberal stage where women are equal to men; Marxist stage where women are viewed as different from men; radical/cultural stage where women are viewed as superior; and socialist stage where women are a racially divided class. Another feature of the hegemonic feminist debate revolves round controversies about the portrayal of ‘women of colour’ as ‘uneducated’, and ‘traditional’ compared to ‘white women’ by ‘white feminists’ (Mohanty, 2003; and hooks, 2005).

Feminist discourse also occurred in waves. First-wave feminism identified the political and legal factors that fuelled women's discrimination and unequal status in the society, while second wave feminism argued that female oppression is universal and all-encompassing and deeply entrenched in the economic, political, and social activities of a society (Herriman & Stewart, 1994; and Cudd & Andreasen, 2005). During third-wave feminism there were also agitations by women of colour for an all-inclusive and diverse activism against the oppression of women. According to this school of thought, second-wave feminists mostly made up of middle-class white women did not represent the experiences, interests, and concerns of women of colour. hooks (2005) argued that "white feminists act as if black women did not know sexist oppression existed; [...] they do not understand, cannot even imagine, that black women, as well as other groups of women who live daily in oppressive situations, often acquire an awareness of patriarchal politics from their lived experience (p. 65). Corroborating hook's (2005), Nnaemeka (2005) argued that "some of the most egregious manifestations of 'degrading treatment' and 'lack of respect' lie in the [...] dehumanization and the lack of respect and dignity shown to [African women] in the process [of defending them]" (p. 30). She singled out campaigns against female genital mutilation by Western feminists that lack any "respect for the dignity" of women and girls:

For the Western interventionists [...] to lay claim to any credibility and legitimacy, they must first put respect and dignity back where they belong; [...] the ultimate violence done to African women is the exhibition of their body parts-in this instance the vagina-in various stages of 'unbecoming'. In effect, African women are doubly victimized: first from within (their culture) and second from without (their 'saviours') (p. 30).

Similarly, third-wave feminism also led to agitations by mostly women of colour that women oppression does not occur in isolation but is a result of the intersectionality of other identities of race, gender, sex, age, and status.

## **INTERSECTIONALITY OF GENDER, RACE, CLASS AND STATUS**

The concept of intersectionality was introduced by Crenshaw (1989) to describe how race, class, gender and sexuality intersect and interrelate to oppress the woman. This concept was popularised by Hill Collins (2012) who explained that multiple forms of oppression connect to provide an enabling environment for domination of women. Intersectionality also explores the dynamics between co-existing identities of race, ethnicity, sex, and class and connected systems of oppression against women such as patriarchy. Kangas et al. (2014) argued that intersectionality “is based on an understanding that men and women have layered identities which have resulted from social relations, history and power structures” (p. 10). Crenshaw (1989) also challenged the categorization of women as a homogeneous group by ‘white’ feminists.

Intersectionality is premised on the assumption that unequal power relations do not fall only along gender considerations alone but that individuals can be discriminated against on ethnic, racial, religious grounds or because of their, caste, age, disability, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status and geographic location (Kangas et al., 2014). Sharpes (2018) also argued that an intersectional approach to gender:

Emphasises that women’s particular experiences of violence and discrimination are the result of multiple oppressions—and that these oppressions are structural rather than individual; [...] Gendered inequalities thus intersect with other aspects of oppression, resulting in unique constellations that include not just gender but race, sexuality, ability, age, social class, caste, appearance, marital status or position as a citizen, indigenous person, refugee or asylum-seeker (p. 1).

An intersectional perspective examines how identities are related and shaped by each other in women’s lived experiences and how the social structures of race, class, gender, sexuality, age, and ability intersect. This means that gender discrimination against women can

be directly related, encouraged, and shaped by someone's race or ethnicity as well. Women may experience racism specifically because of their gender, such as sexual violence against women members of racial or ethnic groups during armed conflict in which rape, forced marriages and sexual abuse are used as a weapon or even an instrument of war. Studies (Samu, 2012; Barkindo et al., 2013; and Zenn & Pearson, 2014) found that women in the Boko Haram conflict experienced oppression and gender-based violence due to the intersectionality of gender, religion, race, sex and ethnicity.

A woman from the Muslim North and a woman from the Christian South of Nigeria will both experience oppression differently owing to their race, ethnicity or religion. Women from the Christian Chibok community of southern Borno for example, experienced oppression and discrimination from the hands of the terrorists differently due to their race and religion compared to Muslim women in Northern Borno. Similarly, the Chibok Girls were believed to have been abducted by Boko Haram because of their race, ethnicity and religion (Zenn & Pearson, 2014). Another example was the systematic targeting of Christian women by the Boko Haram sect on the grounds of their religion (Barkindo et al., 2013). Most of these women were from Southern Borno zone of the state. The central argument of intersectionality is that everyone's oppression is different. For instance, older women abducted by the Boko Haram sect are used as cooks and domestic helps while the younger ones are used as sex slaves with others forced into marriage (Idris, 2015). Both forms of oppression differ but intersect with domestic abuse and sexual abuse.

## **NIGERIAN FEMINISM**

In Nigeria, practices that discriminate against women range from female genital mutilation to child marriage, polygamy, wife beating, and widowhood practices like the total seclusion of the widow from the public throughout the period of mourning for her dead husband which might last up to three months or more. Ogbaji (2012) argued that Nigeria's implementation of

the UN Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (UNCEDAW) has had no significant effect on the reduction of domestic violence, harmful traditional practices and under-representation of women in decision making. Okome (2002) also argued that, “structures of inequality that lead to discrimination against women are [...] found in pre-colonial societies with predominantly male-dominant social systems, [but were] however, [...] institutionalized as a new legal structure— ‘Native Law and Customs’—during colonial rule” (p. 47). The Federal Ministry of Women’s Affairs and Social Development (2006) Report on gender roles revealed that, “Nigeria is a highly patriarchal society, where men dominate all spheres of women’s lives” (p. 6). Similarly, results of a study conducted by Ezeifeke and Osakwe (2013) on gender representation in the 1999 Nigerian constitution demonstrated that some aspects of the constitution encourage biases against women. Despite the prevalence of some of these practices, studies (O’Barr & Firmin-Sellers, 1995; Okome, 2002; Ajayi, 2007; Tar Tsaior, 2010; and Nwachukwu & UnekeEnyi, 2015) suggested that in pre-colonial Nigeria, women played active and productive roles in the respective traditional, religious, cultural and political settings of their societies.

During colonialism, some of the influence exerted by women reduced. For example, in politics and administration, women lost a great deal of authority and the opportunity to participate in decision-making due to their exclusion from all levels of administration by the British colonial administration (Ajayi, 2007). Education also disadvantaged women during colonialism. Okome (2002) argued that “Education, although generally considered to emancipate women from traditional oppression, did not always have this result, as colonial education emphasized preparing women for domestic rather than leadership roles within society” (p. 43). Despite these discriminatory practices during the colonial administration, some Nigerian women were part of the nationalist pre-independence movements. Even though



they participated in the struggle for independence, women remained marginalised by the new Nigerian administration which exists to date. Nwagbara (2009) argued:

The political marginalisation of women in Nigeria is a direct upshot of their low participation in government and politics necessitated by patriarchy. A major subject of postcolonial Nigerian state is the exploitation and marginalisation of women in politics. This system is sustained by the logic of patriarchy, male chauvinism, and gendered political mechanics, which undermine democratisation as well as undercut the expansion of the public sphere (p. 8).

In agriculture, women are known to be agricultural workers especially in a traditional society like Nigeria. Unfortunately, Nigerian women farmers are faced with numerous obstacles fuelled by tradition and culture (Salami, 2011). Salami (2011) argued that “female farmers are disadvantaged by (at least) three things: lack of access to land ownership, lack of access to funding and lack of access to technological expertise; [due] largely to [...] traditional beliefs” (p. 1). She cited the rejection of a bill which called for the rights of rural women to have access to agricultural credit facilities and equal treatment in land and agrarian reform by the Nigerian Senate. Okome (2002) also argued that the unequal treatment of women could also be attributed to the Nigerian government’s reluctance to change some of these customary and religious practices.

Apart from colonialism, Nigerian cultural practices have also been identified as another major factor that has led to the subordination of women (Anyanwu, 2004; Ajayi, 2007; and Okome, 2002). Discrimination against women also found expression through popular culture in the form of poems and novels. Barker (2008) argued that “subordination is not merely enforced but gained by consent in the arena of popular culture through the cultural meanings” (p. 10). Rationalizing why this discrimination occurs, Sadiqi et al. (2008) argued that “conventional African history provides only fragmentary images of women because men wrote

it” (p. 35). For instance, Chinua Achebe’s novel, *Things Fall Apart* rightly fits into this category. This novel has been criticised for pandering to patriarchal sentiments despite its anti-colonial stance, because the voice of women was not heard in the novel. Scholars like Spivak (1988), Jeyifo (1993), and Ramone (2011) explained that women were not heard and were repeatedly subordinated while the colonial experience served to perpetuate their voiceless status.

Feminism in Nigeria and other African countries has slightly different shades from the posture of the Western models due to the peculiarities of the African experience. One of the messages disseminated by African women activists at that time was that western feminism cannot cater for their interests in the face of their socio-cultural realities and tradition. What distinguished Western from African activism was the reluctance by most female activists in Nigeria to use the term ‘feminism’ because of its negative connotations. Adebayo (1996) argued that “while accepting the emancipatory nature of feminism, the African feminist has discarded its violent and militant approach” (p. 4). The postcolonial African feminist position is a position of struggle and a fight for the emancipation of women against the yokes of patriarchy, subservience, hegemony, oppression occasioned by colonialism, culture, tradition and religion (Steady, 1981; Ogunyemi, 1988; Ogundipe-Leslie, 1994; Adebayo, 1996; Alkali et al., 2013; Ifechelobi, 2014; and Kabore, 2017). Having observed the often contentious and negative consequences of western feminism, and its failure to understand that the peculiarities of black communities have been left out of the quest for gender justice, some African feminists came together to seek for their emancipation (Alkali et al. 2013). Ifechelobi (2014) argued that “women are not asking for a total emasculation of men [but] that men and women should co-habit peacefully in complementary distribution [and that] African feminism is all about gender inclusion and not alienation” (p. 17).

Kabore (2017) also buttressed the importance of this complimentary role that both sexes should play in the struggle for emancipation and argued “genuine African feminism, unlike Western feminism, is a common fight of women alongside men against foreign exploitation, the acknowledgement of certain iniquities in traditional societies, women’s financial self-reliance, and the focus on women’s issues” (p. 415). In an interview as cited in (Adebayo, 1996), Ogundipe-Leslie (1994) argued that it is not about warring with men, role reversals, or retaliating the many centuries of injustices women suffered at the hands of men, but the struggle is all about building a harmonious and decent society. The postcolonial African feminist position is therefore all about men and women complimenting each other to fight centuries of injustice, emasculation and inequality. Steady (1981) captured this sentiment aptly when he explained that a true African feminism must recognize a common struggle with African men in the fight against foreign domination and exploitation which should not be hostile to men but rather challenge and make them to understand striking aspects of women’s subjugation which are quite different from the domination of Africans.

In a bid to remain relevant within global perspectives, some Nigerian women at the forefront of the struggle like Molaria Ogundipe-Leslie, Chikwenye Okonjo Ogunyemi, Oyeronke Oyewumi; Chimamanda Adichie, and Amina Mama coined various terms that attempted to translate African cultural realities to the discriminated status of women. Various concepts like motherism, womanism, STIWANISM, femocracy, happy feminism and critical/conscientious feminism were used to examine male dominance and oppression. For example, Oyeronke Oyewumi conducted various studies on gender (1997, 2002, 2003, 2010, and 2016) which examined African cultural experiences and interpretations to explain discrimination against women. In her various works, Oyewumi (2002) used postcolonial feminism as a building block to criticize the domination of African studies on the discrimination of women by western feminists. Oyewumi (2002) questioned “the social

identity, interests, and concerns of the purveyors [of western feminism and] their newly acquired power in Western societies to turn what were formerly perceived as the private troubles of women into public issues” (p. 1). She also queried the attribution of women's subordination and oppression worldwide to gender by feminist researchers and explained that gender is a socio-cultural construct and that the social category ‘woman’ is not universal (Oyewumi, 2002). Oyewumi (2002) focused on the nuclear family system which is “the original source of many of the concepts that are used universally in gender research” (p. 1). Oyewumi (2002) argued that “feminist concepts emerged out of the logic of the patriarchal nuclear family, a family form that is inappropriately universalized” (p. 4). Oyewumi (2002) further argued that “because race and class are not normally variable in the family, it makes sense that white feminism, which is trapped in the family, [...] never transcends the narrow confines of the nuclear family” (p. 3). As a result, wherever the woman is, remains her private sphere of subordination (Oyewumi, 2002). She similarly argued that “Gender distinctions are foundational to the establishment and functioning of this family type [and] are the primary source of hierarchy and oppression within the nuclear family” (p. 3).

Oyewumi (2002) explained that the nuclear family is a specifically Euro/American form; which is strange in Africa despite the support it receives from the colonial and neo-colonial state, governmental and nongovernmental organizations. Oyewumi (2002) posited that “When African realities are interpreted based on these Western claims, what we find are distortions, obfuscations in language and often a total lack of comprehension [which] demand rethinking” (p. 5). Oyewumi (2002) cited some African societies like Yorubaland, where gender was not the major issue shaping the society in precolonial times because kinship roles and categories are not gender differentiated. Oyewumi (2002) further explained that “power centres within the family are diffused and are not gender specific [...] because the organizing principle is seniority based on relative age, and not gender” (p. 4). Oyewumi (2002) suggests

that “analysis and interpretations of Africa must start with Africa [and that] meanings and interpretation should derive from social organization and social relations paying close attention to specific cultural and local contexts” (p. 5).

Womanism was the dominant strand of African feminism by Ogunyemi (1984), who argued that it is “characterised by the desire to consider African women’s experience in also argued that womanism is “more relevant to the African woman’s reality and as conciliation” (p. 17). Womanism according to advocates (Ogunyemi, 1984; Kolawole, 1997; and Akung, 2009) is a movement that celebrates the woman’s strength as a pillar, the strength that brings black men to recognize and compromise for harmonious co-existence of both sexes. Akung (2009) argued that womanism is “accommodative, complimentary and non-radical in its approach” (p. 1). Ogundipe-Leslie (1994) buttressed this point in her version of African feminism termed STIWA/STIWANISM which means social transformation including women in Africa. Ogundipe-Leslie (1994) proposed a feminism of cooperation and collaboration. STIWANISM rose out of the desire of many African female intellectuals to develop the concept of Womanism or the issues raised to serve as the cornerstone of their scholarship (Alkali et al., 2013). The difference between STIWANISM and womanism is its transformation agenda. STIWA includes in its agenda social transformation by women. STIWA also introduced the concept of equal partnership with men to drive this transformation agenda. It discusses the African woman ‘s aspirations for strategic equal partnering which is rooted in her cultures. Women have been excluded in transformation agenda in Africa and that approaching women’s experiences as a social transformation will free people from comparing African women’s experiences with Western feminisms (Ogundipe, 1994; and Alkali et al., 2013).

Critical feminism looks at how language is used to denigrate the woman (Ityavyar; 1999; and Adebowale, 2012). Critical feminists like (Ogundipe, 1987; Ityavvar, 1999; Adebowale, 2012; and Salami, 2014) explained that women would continue to be second-class

citizens if the language and symbols of society continue to present them as the 'weaker sex.' Ogundipe (1987) also argued that, "Critical feminism holds that the long-established myths and jokes that misrepresent or downgrade women should be abolished to allow room for a new and a better order, which would not deny women their rightful position in society" (p. 45). An offshoot of critical feminism is conscientious feminism which sought to dismantle cultural structures that are abhorrent to the freedom of women such as boy child preference over the girl child (Salami, 2014). Salami (2014) argued that "Although it is impossible for any person – woman, man, transgender, and intersex – to avoid the effects of patriarchy, this predicament also provides opportunities for women to live conscientiously" (p. 1).

Mama (1995) coined the term 'femocracy' to describe how wives of top government officials initiate programs in the name of empowering women which ultimately benefit these women elites. This practice was introduced by the wife of one of Nigeria's former Military heads of state, Maryam Babangida during her husband's (General Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida) regime (1985-1993). Maryam Babangida had initiated a programme known as the Better Life for Rural Women which claimed to emancipate rural women from abject poverty and empower them through various programmes. Mama (1995) defined femocracy as "an anti-democratic female power structure which claimed to exist for the advancement of ordinary women but was unable to do so because it was dominated by a small clique of women whose authority derived from their powerful [husbands], rather than from any actions or ideas of their own" (p. 40). What femocracy has succeeded in doing in the Nigerian polity is to usher in women into the public domain and the setting up of structures for the recognition of women's foray into the democratic space although with minimal success recorded. Mama (1995) argued:

Femocracy is not a viable political phenomenon, and that it does not lead to any sustainable change in women's political status, or to any enduring improvement in the

lives of ordinary women. [...] it cannot be said to have enhanced gender equality or to have in any way challenged conservative attitudes to women (p. 52).

Another form of resistance to discrimination against women was carried out through feminist literature -storytelling and other forms of arts. Tar Tsaior (2010) argued that “Nigerian feminist writers have identified the gaps [...] that define Nigerian male writing [which] has to do with the (mis)representation of the Nigerian woman in the mainstream male literary tradition as a silent, static subjectivity without agency; [and] as a mere appendage of the male and so incapable of independent action” (p. 58). Despite differences in nomenclatures and ideologies, the driving force behind these movements was the desire to liberate the Nigerian woman from all forms of discrimination and oppression. Linked to the Nigerian feminists’ movements is Islamic feminism championed mainly by Muslim women.

## **ISLAMIC FEMINISM**

In North East Nigeria, Islam is the predominant religion (CIA World Fact book, 2016). This society is highly conservative with religion, culture and tradition governing every aspect of life. Islam provides for the rights of the woman as stipulated in the Holy Quran. Some of the provisions depicting women’s equality to men and status in Islam in the Holy Qur’an and the hadith (sayings/teachings) of the Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) included: “And for women are rights over men like those of men over women.” (Qur’an, 2: 228); and “Their Lord responded to them: “I never fail to reward any worker among you for any work you do, be you male or female – you are equal to one another.” (Qur’an, 3: 195). Although these verses are subject to different interpretations, they confirm the protection of the rights of the woman under Islamic law. Coles and Mack (1991) argued: “Islam not only accepts woman’s active pursuit of her rights as an individual, but even promotes and fosters it” (p. 98). Yusuf (2005) identified the Muslim woman’s right to own property, to work outside the home and the right to undertake economic activity; the right to participate in governance, to vote and be voted for, to express

political opinions in public as a citizen and community member; the right to own land and the right to education.

Yusha'u (2017 personal communication) argued that, "in the early history of Islam the key issue that Prophet Muhammad championed was women rights. The pillar behind the emergence and success of Islam was Khadijah his wife, without her the history of Islam is incomplete". Para Mallam (2010) similarly explained that despite the dedication of a whole chapter of the Holy Quran to 'woman' with certain Hadiths (special sayings) attributed to Aiysha, (the favoured wife of Prophet Mohammed), Islam does not allow women to become Imams or lead prayers in mixed-sex congregations. The provisions of these rights notwithstanding, women in North East Nigeria face various forms of discriminatory practices from within and outside their families and societies.

Arif-Fear (2015) argued that "abuses against women in the name of culture and through ignorance and a lack of understanding of Islam, do not represent Islam and are contrary to the rights that Allah had ordained and bestowed upon women" (p. 1). Koziel (2014) also revealed that "in this society women are subjected not only to physical, but also sociocultural conditions that constitute their status of discriminated social groups; [...] in many cases girls are regarded as only 'future housewives' and continue to be the caregivers of the family" (p. 219). Gender inequality and exploitation of women in the North according to Pereira (2005), "takes the form of pervasive beliefs that women are (men's) 'property', and by extension, minors, whose adult status is mediated via men, primarily the father or husband, but also uncle, brother and so on" (p. 7). Koziel (2014) argued that, "It is clear that many [...] women do not access their rights in Muslim laws, because they do not know of them or how to actualize them in day-to-day life" (p. 217). Hiding under the guise of Islam, most men in the North carry out oppressive practices against women which have limited their ability for self and societal development.



One of the areas where the rights of women in the North suffer is the observance of seclusion rights, which coincides with place of living, class, age and educational distinction. Seclusion (Kulle in Hausa language) is a major practice that discriminates against the woman in Northern Nigeria and has limited women's general freedom of movement within the private or public spaces restricting women's economic activities at the market and access to public medical care (Reynolds, 1998; and Imam, 1997). Reynolds (1998) argued that "the social and cultural impact of the seclusion of [...] women (kulle) is of great importance, since it has limited women's general mobility within the private or public spaces and in many cases led to a restriction on women's economic activities at the market and access to public medical care" (p. 67). Imam (1997) also explained that seclusion in the North should however be looked at within societal relations of gender- between women and men as demonstrated in relations to power, economics, and ideology. This again highlights the intersectionality of gender, ethnic, age and class identities, patriarchal discrimination and other forms of oppression against women in Northern Nigeria.

Education of girls is another area where women suffer discrimination in the North. This occurs in the form of cultural practices where most of the young girls are married off to elderly men for economic or social benefits to their parents. Koziel (2014) argues that, "the most problematic issue is preventing girl-children from attending school and refusal to enrol them into formal schools [which is] directly connected to withdrawing and using children for street hawking" (p. 218). Closely linked to this is the problem of forced marriages, and child marriages before completion of education. A major consequence of early marriages is the rampant cases of adolescent pregnancies with resultant deaths during childbirths and severe health complications such as obstructed labour or VVF – Vesico Vaginal Fistula and RVF - Recto Vaginal Fistula. A study conducted by Yusuf (2005) found that "the morbidity and maternal mortality rates are the highest in the Northern states and the figures recorded at three

hospitals in Kano are 3,974 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births” (pp.10-11). Similarly, statistics released by Partnership for Reviving Routine Immunization in Northern Nigeria: - Maternal New-born and Child Health Initiative (PRRINN-MNCH) (2013) revealed that women in parts of the predominantly Muslim North are 10 times more likely to die in childbirth than in the Christian South due to poverty and cultural barriers that often prevent northern women from accessing professional health services.

Because of some of these discriminatory practices, some organizations and women activists have initiated programmes that challenge the subordination of women in Islam within the provisions of the Holy Quran. Whitcher (2005) argues that “women are now returning to the texts of their faith, exemplified by *The Qur'an* and *The Hadith*, and are working within the confines of Islamic ideology to reclaim their rights as Moslems” (p. 7). A common feature shared by women fighting for their rights in Nigeria and Muslim women activists is their refusal to be branded as feminists. Ayoola and Hunsu (2014) argue that Muslim women activists “are not comfortable with being called feminists, and they actually resisted being branded as such initially, because such branding frames them as anti-Islam and blasphemers; [but] have continued to resist the injustice and the trajectory of patriarchy and male-centred practices that prevail in Islamic countries” (p. 75).

In their struggle for the rights of women, Muslim women’s resistance to their oppression took different forms. Badran (2009) distinguishes between secular feminism and Islamic feminism. Ayoola and Hunsu (2014) argue that “Secular feminists and Islamic feminists [...] complement each other by working together to achieve shared goals in the Muslim-majority countries they are found” (p. 76). Other Islamic scholars explain that secular feminism focuses more on gender equality in the public domain (Badran, 2009). To address the contradictions amongst scholars of Islamic feminism, Zine (2006) calls for a “critical faith-centred’ approach to Islamic feminism [which] allows for the analysis of systems of oppression

based on race, ethnicity, class, gender, sexuality, religion, as well as imperialism as they intersect within the lived experiences of marginalized groups” (p. 17). This option focuses on the need to understand the intersectionality of these identities to fight the oppression of women in Islam (Zine, 2006). The Federation of Muslim Women Association in Nigeria (FOMWAN) is one of the organizations set up in 1985 to spearhead the fight for the rights of Muslim women and assist members. FOMWAN’s aims and objectives (2013) also call for education of the Muslim woman; provision of health services; economic empowerment of women; care of early school leavers; rehabilitation of school children, abandoned children, orphans and refugee children; provision of girl-child education and adult literacy for women both in English and Arabic through establishment of schools, both formal and informal (Kolziel, 2014).

Critics of the feminists’ movement in Nigeria built their arguments on the possibility that it will destroy the African spirit and communality (Nnolim, 1994; and Shahada, 2010). Nwachukwu and UnekeEnyi (2015) argued that “feminist ideology [...] is a monster [...] and therefore dangerous to traditional imperatives of patriarchal culture; [it] courts disaster for the future of the Nigerian and the African society; [...] and endangers the sense in family life which is the root of the African society” (p. 80). Shahadah (2010) similarly argued that “the African woman should never seek to locate her liberation within the Eurocentric boundaries of feminism, [which] perverts’ human nature and sees broken homes growing around the world” (p. 1). Other scholars do not believe that the African woman and indeed the Nigerian woman is powerless. Building on this notion, Chinweizu (1990) argued that, “If the essence of power is the ability to get what one wants, then women are far from powerless; [they] do get and always did get what they want be it riches, or thrones, [...] or routine exemption from hardships and risks which their men folk are obliged to endure (p.11).” Adou (2016) also argued:

There is no need for men or women to be feminists in African societies; [...] women oppressed and marginalized status in Nigeria and by extension in patriarchal societies

in general is not solely due to their gender; [...] other factors are to be scrutinized to understand their unfavourable status in Nigeria (p. 24).

Despite all the misgivings about efforts by African women and by extension Nigerian women to speak against their disadvantaged position, this study argues that women still contend with discriminatory practices in Nigeria.

## **PATRIARCHY**

At the root of the domination and oppression of women is patriarchy. Feminists have argued that in any of the historical forms that patriarchal society operates, there is a systematic discrimination and subordination of women. Many definitions have been offered to explain patriarchy at the core of which is the domination of the woman by the man. The operational definition used in this study was advanced by Walby (1993) who defined patriarchy as a “system of social structures and practices in which men dominate, oppress and exploit women [through] patriarchal mode of production, patriarchal relations in paid work, patriarchal relations in the state, male violence, patriarchal relations in sexuality and patriarchal relations in cultural institutions” (p. 20). She explained that these structures although relatively autonomous reinforce and block each other. This definition gives room for variations in the roles women play and in the order of their importance under different patriarchal systems. It also recognizes that it is the institutionalized subordination and exploitation of women by men that is the crux of patriarchy.

Lerner (1986) argues that “men and women are biologically different, but that the values and implications based on that difference are the result of culture; [and] the result of the particular history of women, which is essentially different from the history of men; [which] has been obscured and neglected by patriarchal thought” (p. 6). As a pervasive and enduring phenomenon, patriarchy takes advantage of the available public spaces to dominate women. In patriarchal settings, women are not allowed the space to act and negotiate but are excluded

from mainstream society. Patriarchy takes advantage of every societal loophole to discriminate against women. By default, in a patriarchal society, women are not visible, and are powerless. Women's association with domesticity inhibits them and denies them of an agency. By default, women in patriarchal societies accept this domesticity.

Patriarchal oppression was made more distinct through the publication of Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792). Wollstonecraft did not support total political equality for women in her advocacy for women's equal rights but advocated for better treatment of women by men to perform their roles well (Wollstonecraft, 1792 as cited in Cudd & Andreasen, 2005). Humm (1989) defined patriarchy as a system of "male authority which oppresses women through its social, political and economic institutions; [it] derives its powers from men's greater access to, and negotiation of, the resources and rewards of authority structures inside and outside the home" (p. 159). Aina (1998) also defined patriarchy as a "system of social stratification and differentiation based on sex, which provides material advantages to males while simultaneously placing severe constraints on the roles and activities of females" (p. 6). By these definitions, the patriarch is the head of the household who controls productive resources and reproductive capacities based on the notions of gender superiority and inferiority.

Patriarchy not only occupies the public space on behalf of the woman, it also prevents and discourages her from participating in this public space. Nwagbara (2009) argues that "patriarchy shrinks the confines of the public sphere" (p. 4). As a result, women in patriarchal societies often function at the behest of men. Ajayi (2007) also argues that "justifications for patriarchy are often situated within the boundaries of physiology/biology, tradition, culture, materials and modernity and that patriarchy is the most vital form of feminine domination with its validity resting upon tradition" (p. 140). Entrenched patriarchal sentiments reinforced by the culture, religion, tradition and colonialism have continued to govern how women are treated

in Nigerian society. Schipper (1987) argues that the patriarchal system which is the breeding ground of woman's oppression has been fed by colonialism in the African setting. Tracing the despicable image of the African woman to the pre-colonial era which she compares to "colonial annexation" (p. 155), Schipper (1987) explains that as a victim of male domination, the African woman has been occupied and colonized by the man. Schipper (1987) also argues:

She is deprived of her voice and like those colonized, she is called unreasonable and emotional, thus representing everything that rational men are not or do not want to be. Her situation and that of colonized people are linked in joint martyrdoms (p. 156).

With more Nigerian women getting educated and acquiring skills hitherto the exclusive preserve of men, significant contributions to development in all aspects of social, economic, political and cultural life have been achieved by women. Despite these achievements, women are still treated as unequal partners to men and remain a minority within patriarchal political systems. Patriarchal structures used to disadvantage women are all encompassing and enduring as identified by Millet (2003) and Ajayi (2007). Millet (2003) argued that patriarchy holds a hegemonic dominance over women and runs through all political, social, cultural and economic forms. Corroborating Millet (2003), Ajayi (2007) also argued that "justifications for patriarchy are often situated within the boundaries of physiology/biology, tradition, culture, materials and modernity and that patriarchy is the most vital form of feminine domination with its validity resting upon tradition" (p. 140). These institutions are interrelated with each institution feeding the other and vice versa. Despite the universality of male dominance over the female, the form this domination takes differs between ideologies, culture, religion, society and locale.

One of the structures patriarchy feeds on is biology that takes the form of superior male strength reinforced by early socialization (Millet, 2003; and Ajayi, 2007). Para-Mallam (2010) argues that "regardless of social categorizations that differentiate women, their biological sex constitutes the basis for discrimination and exclusion" (p. 7). Millet (2003) also argues that

“the conditioning of early childhood [...] of self-perpetuation; [and the] expectations the culture cherishes about his gender identity encourage the young male to develop aggressive impulses and the female to thwart her own or turn them inward” (p. 31). In Africa for instance, men and women are taught to behave and think in ways which reinforce the biological differences that exist between them.

The family as a major institution of socialization also plays an important role in fuelling and sustaining patriarchy across generations. Millet (2003) refers to the family as “a patriarchal unit within a patriarchal whole; [its] chief contribution [...] is the socialization of the young into patriarchal ideology’s prescribed attitudes” (pp. 33, 35). In Nigeria, the family is the institution that influences marriage, child custody and inheritance among others (Sa’ad, 2001). Family structures and norms in Nigerian societies are built and conditioned to disadvantage women. Patriarchal practices also thrive on the psychological traits of women. Millet (2003) argues that women have internalised expected character traits of a “minority status: group self-hatred and self-rejection, a contempt both for herself and for her fellows” (p. 56). Adebowale (2012) also argues that “whether subconsciously or wilfully, women actively grease the machinery of patriarchy that keeps them subordinated in society and politics, and since they are the custodians of cultural values, they believe in and accept their own oppression” (p. 229).

Because of this mindset, most women seem to have accepted the status quo and have lost the will to fight discriminatory practices. Adou (2016) argues that “women actively participate in the perpetuation of this discriminatory social order even on aspects that do not favour them; [an] attitude [which] stems from [...] a will to preserve a traditional social order” (p. 90). Most women accept patriarchal practices due to either their religious beliefs, culture or tradition. Some scholars like (Batliwala, 1994; and Adebowale, 2012) suggest that through a complex network of religious sanctions, socio-cultural taboos and superstitions that affect women in traditional families such as seclusion, veiling, and discrimination in food and other

financial resources, women actively participate in prolonging and perpetuating their own oppression. Religion is also used in most Nigerian societies to reinforce their cultural and traditional beliefs to instil fear and ensure female subordination. Para-Mallam (2010) explains that “frequently, sacred writings are filtered through a patriarchal culture lens of synthesized African traditional and Judaic or Islamic values [...] a major rationale for male hegemony and female subjugation” (p. 19). Millet (2003) also argues that “patriarchy has God on its side” (p. 51). Religious beliefs and myths therefore give legitimacy to male dominance and oppression of women. Para-Mallam (2010) also argues:

The Judaeo-Christian idea of God is that of a Sovereign Patriarch, Jehovah – a Father-God - who models patriarchy on earth; [...] although Islam does not conceive of Allah as Father, the language used to refer to this supreme deity is also replete with male designated (or implied) pronoun” (p. 470).

Some scholars (Asigbo, 2002; and Adamu et al., 2010) argued that it is not religious practice that gives patriarchy the backing to disadvantage the woman, but the meanings and interpretations ascribed to religious texts. Adamu et al. (2010) argued that, “it is often dominant interpretations of religious texts that produce female subordination rather than the religious texts themselves” (p. 78). Asigbo (2002) also argued that “the so-called relegation of the female [...] to a subordinate position has both religious and sociocultural backing” (p. 226); and cited one of the injunctions in the Holy Bible which calls on ‘Wives to be obedient to their husbands’ (Holy Bible, Ephesians 5:22-24). This text in the Holy Bible is known to have been the backing most Christian organizations needed to exert and insist on obedience and submission from women despite oppressive practices against them (Asigbo, 2002; and Para Mallam, 2010).

Patriarchy also relies on the rule of physical force to thrive. Studies by (Millet, 2005; and Para-Mallam, 2010) reveal that hegemonic masculinity is a product of patriarchal cultural conditioning whereby males are socialized into aggressive and dominant behaviour and



females to passivity and submissiveness. Koziel (2014) cites “statutory, religious and customary law [...] especially the introduction of Sharia law in some states in Northern Nigeria [which] permit violence [...], such as harmful practices and domestic violence, [and] marital rape” (p. 223). Millet (2005) also argues that “control in patriarchal society would be imperfect, even inoperable, unless it had the rule of force to rely upon” (p. 42). Waddell-Harris (2017) explained that terrorist organizations take advantage and easily exploit women in patriarchal societies.

Yet, not all women are passive victims of patriarchy. Women in Nigeria (WIN) and African Feminists Forum (AFF) are two out of several organizations set up by women activists to fight patriarchal practices that have oppressed them. Okoroafor and Iheriohanma (2014) also argued that patriarchal practices have continued throughout the ages because of its stabilising effect on societal equilibrium:

It has survived generations, different forms of social change and revolutions and was able to do so because of its potentially advantageous implications. As a social practice, patriarchy has dominated matriarchy because it is biologically, biblically, economically and structurally more powerful, relevant, sensible and functional to human existence, survival and development (p. 160).

Some scholars (Maduka, 2003; and Okoroafor & Iheriohanma, 2014) have questioned the rationale for feminists’ agitations and argued that the very idea of male domination is un-African because each sex has specific roles to play in society. In line with this position, Maduka (2003) argued that in Africa, “men dominate socio-political spheres of life while women are prominent in spiritual and metaphysical realms; [...] the idea that men dominate women is false because what determines social status in Africa [...] is economic power and hardly gender” (p. 22). This practice can be found in some Nigerian societies where women are found to be female deities and are worshipped by both men and women - Bori religious sect and Yorub deities.

Building on Said (1978) and Spivak (1988), this section argues that women representations in the media and journalistic discourse reflect patriarchy right from colonial times to present day post colonialism. This section argues that the Gramscian notion of hegemony has also played an important role in shaping theories of feminism (hooks, 1984; Mohanty, 2003; and Sandoval, 2003). Of interest in this section is radical feminism which postulates that violence exists as part of patriarchal social structures and is an intentional pattern of behaviour utilized to establish and maintain power and control. The intersectionality of ethnicity, gender, religion and sex with other forms of discrimination and patriarchal oppression have contributed to the misrepresentations of women by the news media. The discriminated status of women in North east Nigeria, where the Boko Haram conflict is raging is further compounded when Islamic religion, ethnicity and patriarchy intersect to further relegate the woman to a 'second class' status.

## **MEDIA THEORIES AND MEDIA SYSTEMS**

Past and contemporary theories of the mass media are important in understanding news media practice in different societies, cultures, economies and political systems. To unpack some of the theories of the news media relevant to this study, journalistic roles, cultures, and practices and the contextual factors that influence them and the theoretical framework within which they operate will be examined. Other factors such as the influence of democracy and the internet, development journalism, regional parallelism, media ethics, agenda-setting role of the news media, and media representations will equally be analysed.

## **MEDIA THEORIES**

Examining the Nigerian news media system is key to understanding how the news media have represented women in the Boko Haram conflict. This study draws on the concept of regional parallelism as proposed by Yusha'u (2010). A major problem in trying to identify a single

theory for the mass media is because it is an all-encompassing industry which feeds into other spheres of life (Turnstall, 1971). Scholars (McQuail, 1995; Herbert, 2000; and Yusha'u, 2010) have identified key features of media theories. For instance, Herbert (2000) argued that a theory of journalism must encompass among other things: “elements of a good story; understanding and critical analysis of the various theories involved in [...] reporting news; an informed and creative approach to professional practice; transferable skills located within theoretical and practical frameworks; an understanding of advances in technology; a sense of social responsibility” (p. ix). Journalists around the world work in different environments, and the challenges and pressures they experience differ based on the contexts within which they work, which is key to understanding what role they play in their respective societies (Slavtcheva-Petkova & Bromley, 2018). Journalism is context specific and revolves round journalistic roles, practices and cultures (Slavtcheva-Petkova & Bromley, 2018). Slavtcheva-Petkova and Bromley (2018) argued:

In terms of journalistic practices [...], context matters and while there are common trends between and within regions, there are huge sub-regional differences particularly in Africa and Asia [which] is all set against the underlying conditions of media freedom which differ not only in nuanced ways from place to place but globally between the minority of countries with media which were designated as being 'free' and the majority where that was not the case (p. 71).

Hanitzsch (2017) distinguished three dimensions of journalistic roles as interventionism; power distance; and market orientation. Based on the Worlds of Journalism Study (WJS) in 2012, Hanitzsch (2017) developed his earlier framework to include populist disseminators; detached watchdogs; critical change agents; and opportunist facilitators.

Journalists articulate and enact their roles based on what journalists ought to do; what they want to do; what they really do in practice; and what they think they do (Hanitzsch, 2017).

Also, an attempt was made by Slavtcheva-Petkova (2016) to distinguish between what she refers to as ‘real’ journalism and ‘ideal’ journalism – “the ideals cherished by journalists themselves and the expectations of their audiences” (p. 72). In her study of online news commentators’ perceptions of real and ideal journalism, Slavtcheva-Petkova (2016) argues that “ideal journalism revolves around what is sometimes seen as ‘western’ principles—balance and objective coverage, journalism as the ‘fourth estate’ and journalists as watchdogs of society as well as the public interest” (p. 80). According to Slavtcheva-Petkova (2016), online commentators in her study also represent an awful picture of ‘real journalism’ as “manipulative with examples of ‘pre-paid’ or ‘pre-ordered’ articles and journalists serving their owners’ interests” (p. 80), which contrasts with the ideals of balance, objectivity and serving the interest of the public. Hallin and Mancini (2004) however, argue that “even where journalists may be sincerely committed to a professional ideology of ‘objectivity’, news incorporates political values, which arise from a range of influences, from routines of information gathering to recruitment patterns of journalists and shared ideological assumptions of the wider society” (p. 26). Roberts (2013) also explains that news media impact is stronger in countries where residents rely on a few news sources, while nations with several sources will invariably have media organizations that are less influential.

Slavtcheva-Petkova and Bromley (2018) categorised the main indicators influencing journalistic roles into four based on existing typologies (UNESCO, 2014; Worlds of Journalism, 2011; Freedom House, 2013; and Committee to Protect Journalists, 2018): safety threats, including violence against journalists; legal restrictions; state and political pressures; and economic pressures. Comparisons between countries in the global North and global south based on these indicators have revealed some aspects of the hybridity of journalistic

experiences and practices (Slavtcheva-Petkova & Bromley, 2018). Examining these key indicators closely in Africa revealed that, journalists are mostly under attacks from politicians, the military and paramilitary groups and often face the danger of been attacked, threats and harassment while some have been murdered (CPJ, 2017; and Slavtcheva-Petkova & Bromley, 2018). Slavtcheva-Petkova & Bromley (2018) also argued that “Africa is the poorest continent in the world and most of its countries are developing and grappling with a range of issues [which] inevitably affect the work of journalists” (p. 23).

With a weak advertising market, most media organizations in African countries including Nigeria are faced with a lack of sustainable funding, with most invariably relying on government or state-related advertising or funding, which in turn leads to widespread self-censorship (Slavtcheva-Petkova & Bromley, 2018). Slavtcheva-Petkova and Bromley (2018) argued:

One problem that plagues journalists from all types of media is the widespread self-censorship; [...] While the right to freedom of expression is enshrined in the constitutions and legal frameworks of most countries, these provisions were compromised daily by the increasing number of legal and para-legal restrictions, the complicated web of relationships between political and business elites and the media, and the resulting Journalistic practices (pp. 25, 72).

Other pressures and challenges (Slavtcheva-Petkova & Bromley, 2018) revolve round legal restrictions which include: prepublication censorship; content restrictions on national security, public order, public morality and public health grounds; anti-terrorism laws; cybercrime laws; criticism of public officials; publication of false information that could 'disturb the peace'; Laws against defamation; and absence of laws to protect sources which has inhibited investigative reporting. The state of political development of each country was closely linked to the degree of media freedom that journalists enjoyed there. For example, Section

39(1) of the Nigerian 1999 Constitution provides (1): *Every person shall be entitled to freedom of expression, including freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart ideas and information without interference.* However, there is a caveat to enforcing this section. The Official Secrets Act of 1966 as amended limits the extent to which the press can access public information. What these provisions mean is that freedom of expression and of the press as enshrined in section 39 of the 1999 constitution can only be workable if it does not conflict with the restrictions put in place by the Nigerian government. These restrictions have affected journalistic practice in Nigeria as a developing democracy. The relationship between the media and the political elite suggest that African governments often use state-owned media to discredit media critics through their supporters to intimidate and attack political opponents (Tettey, 2001).

Another major factor that has affected journalistic roles and culture in Nigeria is the influence of the internet. Africa has the lowest internet penetration in the world with only 35.2 per cent of the African population having internet access compared to a worldwide average of 50.7 per cent (Internet World Stats, 2017; and Slavtcheva-Petkova & Bromley 2018). Democracy has also affected journalistic roles, culture and practice. Hutchinson (2008) argues that “the media in a democracy should give to the public the full range of options and opinions on a topic to allow informed opinion to develop; [...] If this cannot be achieved by individual media entities, then there should be an accessible range of outlets that have enough philosophical diversity to produce the same effect” (p. 35). Roberts (2013) also argues:

Although journalism is based on democratic values, it can thrive with or without democracy: its crucial role, regardless of context, is in facilitating association. There is a certain amount of idealism inherent in definitions which suggest that journalism requires democracy as it is the only form of government that respects freedom of

speech, expression and information. By respecting these freedoms, democracy fulfils its part of the contract, but it also requires a system for the flow of information (p. 34).

One of the key issues that influences democracy is new media. Slavtcheva-Petkova (2016) explains the implications of the advent of the internet and social media, which is multi-fold—"from a blurring of the line between media 'professionals' and their audiences to a rethinking of journalistic professionalism and speculations about the future/end of journalism" (p. 70). Roberts (2013) also argues that "the democratising role and potential of new media technology remains disputed in many global contexts [...] new forms of media technology alter the balance of power in favour of those networked individuals, whose ability to challenge political elites in autocratic or semi-autocratic environments has increased substantially via more efficient and effective communication (p. ix). Corroborating this, Hadland (2012) argues that "new technologies and developments within the media, such as the explosion of local community radio and of cell phone usage [in Africa], offer a range of new potentialities around social cohesion, mobilization, and resistance [and] also offer destructive possibilities that may exacerbate ethnic, racial, and national cleavages, which could do much to reverse or even undermine democratic consolidation" (p. 116).

Journalists also play different roles during conflicts. Slavtcheva-Petkova (2018) argues that "journalists are not passive actors in the process [of mediatisation of conflicts], [...] An essential part of the mediatisation process as far as journalists are concerned is the balancing of the conventional rules of reporting (whatever they are in the relevant contexts) with/against journalists' own national identities" (p. 52). Thussu and Freedman (2003) identify the roles media play in conflicts as: critical observer, publicist, and "battleground, [...] upon which war is imagined and executed" (p. 4). Hutchinson (2008) also argues that "during times leading up to or during conflict the media has a responsibility to inform the public in a way that allows

them to make a rational judgement about government actions. However, most of the rhetoric at these times tends to be propagandistic and combative in nature” (p. 35).

Other scholars situate media theories within the political, social, cultural and economic systems they operate (Bourgault, 1995; Yusha’u, 2010; Obijiofor & Hanusch, 2011; Mabweazera, 2015; and Slavtcheva-Petkova & Bromley, 2018). As rightly argued by McQuail (1995), media systems “in most countries, [...] do not constitute any single ‘system’, with a single purpose or philosophy, but are composed of many separate, overlapping, often inconsistent elements, with appropriate differences of normative expectation and regulation” (p. 113). Obijiofor and Hanusch (2011) also argued that “media systems and models, whether at regional or continental levels of assessment, are not homogeneous” (p. 24). This could be due to differences in historical, legal, cultural, political, economic and religious factors influencing journalism all over the world. Hallin and Mancini (2004) similarly argued that “media systems are shaped by the wider context of political history, structure, and the culture” (p. 46). Slavtcheva-Petkova (2018) also argued that “The media system of a country is closely linked to its economic, political, and cultural context” (p. 38).

Hallin and Mancini (2004) explained that the media in different countries have diverse political orientations. For instance, journalists in the global North, are mainly challenged by legal restrictions, and some economic and political pressures while in the global South, journalists are mostly challenged by these pressures (Slavtcheva-Petkova & Bromley, 2018). In the global South, practising journalism remains dangerous for many with sources of fire coming from government officials, criminal gangs, and the Military (Slavtcheva-Petkova & Bromley, 2018). Siebert et al., (1956)’s four theories of the press are often cited as the first attempt to explain the relationship of the press to the political class and society which also offers an understanding of the dynamics between the news media and the society on the one hand and the effect of this relationship on social and political change (Nerone, 1995). These



theories have been criticized as too simplistic and western centric (Hallin & Mancini, 2004; 2012; and Roberts, 2013). Roberts (2013) described the four theories of the press as a “reductive overview [that] merely reflect the prevailing philosophy and political system of the society in which they operate [...] a product of its time, and a reflection of the era’s geopolitical reality, echoes of the theory remain (p. 10). Unfortunately, the predominant views about media models and effects are still inhibited by an over-dependence on this reductive simplistic ‘Western centric’ worldview of media systems and theories (Roberts, 2013).

## **MEDIA SYSTEMS IN AFRICA/NIGERIA**

The historical antecedents of Africa played a major role in shaping its media systems. The role and operations of the press therefore varied significantly during the pre-colonial, colonial and postcolonial periods. Bourgault (1995) argued that “the unique combination of historical, political, economic, and cultural factors has conspired to produce media in Black Africa as we found them” (p. 1). The roles media play in the different stages of Africa’s history can be situated within Campbell’s (2003) classification of press systems as vanguard, subservient, reinforcing change agent and clandestine. For example, during the build up to the 2015 general elections in Nigeria, the opposition press has been accused by government apologists of engaging in clandestine journalism. Obijiofor and Hanutsch (2011) argued that “during the colonial period, the African press was influenced by classical liberal democratic traditions of the press which served as a watchdog and an advocate of freedom of expression [helping] to uncover the abuses committed by the colonial administrators and set the tone for pro-independence campaigns” (p. 27). Newspapers set up by Nigerian nationalists served as tools for these campaigns. Some of the newspapers included: *West African Pilot* by Nnamdi Azikwe in 1937; and *Tribune* by Obafemi Awolowo in 1944.

Hallin and Mancini’s (2004) seminal work on comparing media systems relied on the work of Siebert et al. (1956). Although considered pioneers in comparative media system

research, Siebert et al.'s (1956) study was considered normatively biased, ethnocentric and Eurocentric (Roberts, 2013). Factoring on political systems to explain and compare media systems, Hallin and Mancini (2004) also identified weaknesses in Siebert et al.'s (1956) analysis that "tend to assume that each society has a certain world view that will be expressed in each element of its media system" (p. 72). Hallin and Mancini (2004) also built on previous work by Blumler and Gurevitch's (1995) who proposed four dimensions for comparative analysis. One of the theoretical perspectives that Hallin and Mancini (2004) borrowed from was differentiation theory which "takes [...] a certain distance in understanding the broad differences in media systems, particularly in its emphasis on the historical fusion of media systems with the system of political parties and social groups based on class, religion, ethnicity, and the like, and the different degrees to which systems have moved away from these relationships" (p. 85). Building on this, Hallin and Mancini (2004) examined the historical roots within which political institutions and media systems develop and argued that "the relative influence of the media system on political institutions [...] may vary historically, with political forces dominating the media system in some periods, while in other periods the media system is more independent" (p. 47).

Media systems are therefore not static but are characterized by significant historical transformation (Hallin & Mancini, 2004). Hallin and Mancini (2012) argued that media systems had to be understood in the context of social and political institutions more generally" (p. 6). Balcytiene (2012) also argued that "Journalism performs different roles and functions in different systems, and its performance is therefore strongly shaped by contextual features" (p. 65). And because context matters, to understand the Nigerian media system and the framework that best typifies it, there is the need to examine some of the characteristics unique to African media practice. Hadland (2012) argued that "the African media landscape has strong features of political parallelism, with media products, ownership, and audiences frequently reflecting

ethnic, linguistic, racial, or clientelist features. There is often a direct link between journalists and politicians or business [men] with strong political affiliations” (p. 116).

For example, with regards to the role of state intervention in media systems, Hallin and Mancini (2004) proposed that the role of the state can be assessed according to its function as media owner, regulator and funds provider. They argued that “the state plays a significant role in shaping the media system in any society [with] considerable differences in the extent of state intervention as well as in the forms it takes” (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, p. 41). Hadland (2012) however argued that “although Hallin and Mancini (2004) talked about state intervention, they did not devote much time in analysing different forms of state interventions particularly in young democracies” (p. 96). African scholars like Nisbet and Moehler (2005), and Hadland (2012) argued that there are enough shared historical experiences and challenges to conceptualize an African-based model. Obijiofor and Hanutsch (2011) also argued that such conceptualisations as Hallin and Mancini’s models have only provided the springboard upon which Western media models and their historical antecedents can be studied and compared to other media models found in different cultures but have downplayed the significance of media systems in non-Western societies like Africa, Latin America, the Middle East and Asia. Hadland (2012) also argued:

Although the limitations and weaknesses of the African state in its format are evident, [...] Where for instance, is the place of ancestors in the three-model paradigm? [...] religion? [...] the different languages and how do they collude and collide? Where is ethnicity? [...] and pan-Africanism that loom so large in the discourse and in the realities of contemporary African life? (p. 112).

In trying to answer these questions, Nisbet and Moehler (2005), and Hadland (2012) argued that Africa is ripe for its own unique model that will reflect its postcolonial experiences and democracies. Nisbet and Moehler (2005) proposed five models of political communication

systems which can be applied in sub-Saharan Africa based on the type of regime, the degree of press freedom and control exerted within legal, political, and economic domains. These models are open democratic; liberalized democratic; liberalized autocratic; closed autocratic; and repressive autocratic (Nisbet & Moehler, 2005). Yusha'u (2010) drew on Hallin and Mancini's (2004) work on key indicators for comparing media systems to propose a framework that typifies the Nigerian media system. These indicators include: development of media markets; political parallelism; the development of journalistic professionalism; and the degree and nature of state intervention in the media system which centres on the strong or weak development of a mass circulation press; the degree and nature of the links between the media and political parties or the extent to which the media system reflects the major political divisions in society (Hallin & Mancini, 2004).

Hallin and Mancini (2004) had proposed key indicators to compare media systems in 18 nations of Western Europe and North America which had “relatively similar histories as advance capitalist democracies [and] wanted to avoid the [...] universalizing approach to comparative analysis in media studies- symbolised by Siebert et al.'s Four Theories of the Press (1956)” (p. 1). Using 5 dimensions, Hallin and Mancini (2004) identified three models as the Mediterranean or Polarized Pluralist Model, the North/Central European or Democratic Corporatist Model, and the North Atlantic or Liberal Model. Hallin and Mancini (2012) argued that the “three models might be useful as points of comparison, for noting similarities and differences, and for beginning the process of asking why these similarities and differences existed” (p. 4). Building on this, Yusha'u (2010) developed the concept of ‘regional parallelism’ as a framework to describe Nigeria’s media system.

## **REGIONAL PARALLELISM**

Justifying the adoption of this framework, Yusha'u (2010) argues that “journalism cannot be practiced outside the purview of the society in which it exists [and] that borrowing models from

other places and applying them in the African context may not work [because] each society has its distinct political and historical realities” (p. 365). This framework is the bedrock upon which this research is built. In a study on factors that influence the practice of journalism in Nigeria using the reporting of corruption as a yardstick, Yusha’u (2010) refers to ‘regional parallelism’ as the “influence of regional, ethnic, sectional, political and religious considerations in the practice of journalism [which] is rooted in the historical, economic, geographical and political realities of a given country” (p. 363). Building on Hallin and Mancini’s (2004) dimension of ‘political parallelism’ as a framework for understanding media systems of different countries, some of the features of regional parallelism like the concept of ‘clientelism’ where personal loyalty and other sociocultural affiliations to a cause or region supersede professionalism (Yusha’u, 2010).

In Nigeria, personal loyalty and other sociocultural affiliations have been identified as some of the major factors that have motivated media owners to establish a printing press (Malaolu, 2004). While owners of the more prominent print and broadcast media may be of south-south and south-east origin or indigeneity, the operational location of their media business is the south-west (Oyovbaire, 2001). Most of the media organizations established in Southern Nigeria serve that region’s interests (Malaolu, 2004). As a result, their perspective on events follows the structure of Nigerian politics which is regionally based (Post & Vickers, 1975; and Yusha’u, 2010). Jibo and Okoosi-Simbine (2003) argued:

It is the ideology or the politics of the proprietor that decides media-bias, or slant, [...] when a national issue enters the public domain for debate, the Nigerian media often, though not all the time, takes a North-versus-South position on it [which] is so deep that public policy defers to it, and mass media outfits skew their reports and analyses to accommodate the interests of its adherents (pp. 182-183).

For example, the role of the media in the fight against corruption is often hampered by the tendency to prejudice the public against personalities and interests from certain parts of the country (Jibo & Ookoosi-Simbine, 2003). The problems of partisan, biased or ethnic reporting are deeply rooted, and dates to the anti-colonial press, when the nationalist press was fractured along ethnic and party lines (Olukotun, 2000). Yusha'u (2010) identifies major determinants of regional parallelism as: location; the elites; partisan and commercial interests; financial disparity in media ownership; and societal complexities. Yusha'u (2010) explains that the Nigerian news media develop bonds based on factors associated with regional and ethnic affiliations which are tied to the origin of Nigeria as a nation state on one hand, and the growth of newspapers, on the other. The struggle between the northern and southern regions is reflected in news media narratives about the country and the environment that nurture such narratives (Yusha'u, 2010; and Hallin & Mancini, 2004). These highlight the existence of the north/south dichotomy in the news media and leads to some form of self-censorship in which news reportage might be dictated by the region of the person affected in the story and political affiliations (Yusha'u, 2010). The location of a media organization has also been identified as a major feature of regional parallelism. Yusha'u (2010) explains that South West Nigeria has monopoly over media ownership as against Northern Nigeria due to "the advantages of history, western education, political and economic power and the emergence of a middle class" (p. 364).

The second feature of regional parallelism is the support of Nigerian elites who utilize the news media to promote their personal, regional, business or religious interests. Joseph (1988) in his work on clientelism and corruption in Nigerian politics in the second republic provided an insight into how Nigerian elites use various means to achieve their personal interests and how different ethnic, regional and other interest groups struggle to accumulate the resources of the state for personal or sectional reasons. Yusha'u (2010) also singled out

Joseph's (1988) notion of 'prebendal' system which refers to "patterns of political behaviour which rest on the justifying principle that [state] offices should be competed for and then utilised for the personal benefit of office holders and as well as of their reference or support group" (p. 364). In Nigeria, most politicians who venture into politics for personal, sectional or regional interests are the same people who invest in the news media with such interests reflected in media narratives. These interests are tied to the third feature of regional parallelism which is to promote business and political interests (Yusha'u, 2010). Another factor that promotes regional parallelism in the Nigerian news media is the imbalance in newspaper ownership where most newspapers are more concentrated in one region than the other. This characteristic is manifested in the large number of news media organizations especially newspapers in Southern Nigeria while Northern Nigeria has only a few strong ones. Some of the factors that have contributed to the survival of the media in the South-western part of Nigeria include its vibrant economy, many professionals, the nature of newspaper readership and the interests of their owners (Yusha'u 2010).

This work is therefore built on the premise that the Nigerian news media operate under regional parallelism with modifications when it best suits them. Again, this regional dichotomy is flexible and depends on market forces, political and national interests and topical issues of the moment. This invariably means that news media representations of women in the Boko Haram conflict is subject to regional, geographical, political and economic interests of the owners. But as argued by Yusha'u (2010), these factors cannot stand in isolation but are intertwined with Nigeria's colonial legacy, its culture, tradition and religion.

## **MEDIA ETHICS**

The desire of journalists to report responsibly, accurately, and objectively is often conflicted with other pressures (Nwabueze, 2010). One ethical challenge which poses a threat to the image of the journalism profession and ability of practitioners to perform their duties objectively is

the brown envelope syndrome which refers to the practice of accepting gifts for performing journalistic tasks. The brown envelope syndrome among journalists could be traced to the culture of presenting kola nuts to visitors, a practice common in many African societies. Okoro and Ugwuanyi (2006) conducted an analysis of journalism in four Southeast states and one North-central state in Nigeria and found that 54.2% of respondents view brown envelopes as material favour while 51.4% do not see acceptance of brown envelope as unethical, even though their organizations condemn it. Omenugha and Oji (2007) argued that “journalism practice wields such enormous powers and calls for the highest standards of ethics and commitment to truth [unfortunately] the current practices in most media organizations in Nigeria seem to be encouraging unethical practices, [...] rather than pay attractive wages to the journalists, [publishers] refer to their identity cards as a meal ticket” (p. 17).

One of the major factors that have perpetuated the brown envelope syndrome is the commercialization of news in Nigeria. Commercialization of news was introduced because of the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) in 1986 and the eventual withdrawal of subsidies from government-owned media houses (Ekwo, 1996). With the increasing rise in production and dwindling circulation, media houses resorted to strategies on how to meet these demands (Oso, 2000). One of the major issues that made commercialization thrive is the poor remuneration journalists receive (Galadima & Enighe, 2001; Oso, 2000; and Omenugha & Oji, 2007). Omenugha and Oji (2007) argue that “some media organizations officially make reporters to function as marketing officers in addition to main reportorial duties” (p. 17) while those in charge of specialized pages or columns are made to source for adverts to support ‘their’ pages or face dismissal (Oso 2000). Some journalists justify the collection of gratification in the form of brown envelopes with the poor and irregular salaries they receive (Omenugha & Oji, 2007). Commercialisation of news has similarly affected how news reports are selected and produced. Omenugha and Oji (2007) examined the primary means of news gathering



among Nigerian journalists and find that ‘slated’ or ‘diary’ events topped the list with 60% followed by interviews (32%), investigative reports (6%), while news breaks or exclusives recorded 2% which suggests that journalists cover scheduled events more than investigative journalism. Galadima and Enighe (2001) refer to this type of journalism as ‘views’ papers.

Protagonists of news commercialization have argued that it has generated income for media organizations and the individual journalists; imposed a form of forced taxation on the rich; acted as a form of informal redistribution of income from the rich to the poor; and created cordial working relationships between the media and the political class (Onyisi, 1996). Some researchers who argued against the commercialization of news like (Ekwo, 1996; and Omenugha & Oji, 2007) suggested that it has not only violated the ethics and code of conduct of journalism but has affected information flow; made the news susceptible to abuse by interest groups who can pay; and led to news distortion. The ethical implications of commercialization can similarly be manifested in communal conflicts where only the factions that can pay are mentioned in the news while the others that cannot pay are silenced (Ekwo, 1996).

Other Scholars (Adio, 2001; Wasserman, 2008; and Skerdel, 2010) have however argued that accepting brown envelopes is consistent with African hospitality of not rejecting gifts coupled with the need for media workers to survive in economically challenging environments. Wasserman (2008) argued:

Low salaries and insecure conditions of employment of journalists have resulted in journalists accepting payments from news sources in return for coverage [and that] instead of labelling this practice as ‘bribery’ and simply condemning it, [...] a judgement could be reached by applying a hybrid ethical framework. [...] in which African journalists must negotiate their professional identities in such a way as to cope with the material conditions of their work while retaining the ethical imperative of providing credible and fair reports (p. 82).

Other ethical issues that have affected news media practice in Nigeria include pack journalism (Graber, 1989); churnalism (Davis, 2008); yellow journalism, lapdog/sunshine journalism (Louw, 2010); and armchair journalism/journalism of convenience. Pack journalism is “the clamour for the scoop and in-depth coverage in crisis situations [which] often leads to inaccuracies in reportage being replicated throughout the media” (Graber, 1989, pp. 315- 316). Closely tied to this is churnalism. The Collins English Dictionary defines churnalism as a type of journalism that relies on reusing existing material such as press releases and wire service reports instead of an original research especially because of increased demand for news content. Davies (2008) argues that ‘churnalism’ is produced by “journalists who are no longer gathering news but are reduced instead to passive processors of whatever material comes their way, churning out stories, whether real event or PR artifice, important or trivial, true or false” (p. 59). Such stories, he explains are no longer original and become susceptible to manipulation and distortion by journalists. Although Davies (2008) applied churnalism to the British media, this practice is also found within the Nigerian news media practice where journalists often reuse press releases and wire services. Closely linked to churnalism and pack journalism is armchair journalism/journalism of convenience.

Louw (2010) refers to lapdog journalism as a process where journalists cooperate with politicians to make the political system work. He argues that “It is easy for partisan journalists to slide into becoming lapdog journalists when (successful) revolutionary movements they support become governments” (p. 50). Similarly, another major ethical dilemma African journalist face is the issue of clientelism. Yusha’u (2010) argues that “people can also plant stories or bribe the journalists to ignore certain stories. This will make the reporting of corruption much more complex, by allowing the media to be a platform for political opponents to settle scores; [...] to either promote or blackmail people” (p. 363).

van Zoonen (1994) argues that the journalist is duty bound to “cooperate with colleagues, [...] take the specific needs, routines and traditions of the organisations into account, and is limited by the social, economic and legal embedding of the media institution” (p. 49). But would these considerations be at the expense of ethics? Kasoma (1999) argues that “ethics begins where elements within a moral system conflict, and a person (journalist) is called upon to choose between various alternatives” (p. 447). This conflict especially happens when a journalist is faced with cultural values that are incompatible with the ethics of the profession. Ward (2008) also argues that “the task of journalism ethics is to systematically weigh these partialities with the broader public duties of journalism [and] where the partial and public good conflict, the latter takes precedence” (p. 49)

Media ethics in Africa points to the lack of commitment from journalists and others working in the media because it is not anchored and rooted in African values (Mfumbusa, 2008; and Kasoma, 1996). Most journalists in Africa have become used to news distortion or suppression to the extent that the public hardly gets the balanced and complete information they need to make informed decisions about national issues (Ndangam, 2006). White (2010) argues that “at the heart of media ethics is this drive to discern what the public wants to know and to get the information to the public so that this public, [...] can participate intelligently in current debate and decision-making processes” (p. 49). Omenugha and Oji (2007) also argue that “how Nigerian media institutions and journalists are to be judged depends upon how much they are credible before the eyes of the public” (p.26).

Because of the tensions between journalistic professionalism and societal/cultural expectations from their environments, African scholars have proposed models that are Afrocentric. Some African scholars (Tomaselli, 2003; Mlambo, 2006; de Beer, 2010; and Mabweazara, 2015) have condemned what they termed as the ‘overreliance’ on western theorization of media practice and ethics. Afrocentric concepts such as pan-Africanism,

negritude, Afriethics and ubuntu which emphasise communality and the resilience of the African to be his/her brothers' keeper were some of the concepts advocated by African scholars (Kasoma, 1996; and Agbanu, 2009) to be incorporated into media practice and ethics in the region.

Negritude which was promoted by Césaire (1913–2008), Damas (1912–1978) and Senghor (1906–2001) was a literary movement that protested French colonial rule and the policy of assimilation. Césaire (1972) argued that before, during and after colonialism, Africans were their brothers' keepers, a situation quite different from “the negative implications of barbarism attached to them within colonialist thought” (p. 60). Negritude's advantage was its level of struggle and assertion in the face of the racial denigration of black people (William & Chrisman, 1993). Basic ideas behind negritude as outlined by Encyclopaedia Britannica (2002) are: that Africa's connection to nature and its regular contact with its ancestors should be placed in the right context against the individualism and greediness of Western culture; that Africans must draw on their cultural heritage to define how they relate and interact in the world; that African writers should use indigenous subject matter and traditions and generate the desire for self-actualization; and that African dignity and traditions must be asserted. It can be argued that the basic foundations of ubuntu which emerged from South Africa can also be located within negritude which celebrates everything African.

The term ubuntu derived from the Zulu maxim *umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu*, meaning ‘a person is a person through other persons’ or ‘I am because of others’ (Fourie, 2008). Nussbaum (2003) defines Ubuntu as “the capacity in African culture to express compassion, reciprocity, dignity, harmony and humanity in the interest of building and maintaining community with justice and mutual caring” (p. 1). Ubuntu, therefore, speaks to Africa's common humanity, the sense of responsibility to each other and the deep connection as Africans to values such as truth, freedom and justice defined by community (Okigbo, 1996;

Blankenberg, 1999; Nussbaum, 2003; Tutu, 2008; and Fourie, 2008). Fourie (2008) argues that “Ubuntuism moves beyond an emphasis on the individual and individual rights and places the emphasis on sharing and on individual participation in a collective life [...] it differs from the emphasis on the self in mainstream Eurocentric philosophies” (p. 108). Fourie (2008) proposes that ubuntu as an ethical framework be adopted to guide media practice in the continent. This is because other African practitioners and communication scholars see western media liberalism as a remnant of western colonialism (Kasoma, 1996; and Blankenberg, 1999).

An ubuntu media framework would therefore require the media’s key role to embrace and provide a platform for the views, concerns, and opinions of the community (Blankenberg, 1999; and Okigbo, 1996). Within the ubuntu media framework, issues like freedom of expression, objectivity, factuality and balanced reporting are encouraged in as much as they do not conflict with the interest of the community. Fourie (2008) argues that “Freedom of expression is synonymous to the community’s freedom to form opinions, express its anxieties and desires and question authority where necessary [while] objectivity [...] conflicts with objectivity and detachment [...] basic requirements for liberal journalism” (p. 110). Okigbo (1996) however argues that adopting this framework will conflict with the goals of journalistic objectivity, impartiality, and fairness. This is because as an involved member of the community, the journalist operating under this framework can hardly be detached from the community he/she is expected to write stories about. The journalist cannot be an uninterested observer about issues affecting his/her community. Although concepts such as negritude, pan Africanism, ubuntuism, and Afriethics among other Afrocentric concepts have dominated African scholarly discussions on ‘de-westernising’ news media practice (Mlambo, 2006; and Mabweazara, 2015), the question is can African media theory, ethics and practice stand in isolation since they owe their very existence to colonialism?

Mabweazara (2015) argues that African theories cannot stand on their own as such 'ethnocentric' stances are not always necessarily valuable. As Obijiofor and Hanutsch (2011) argue, "there are historical links between European models and the systems of mass media that emerged in former colonies after independence" (p. 22). Wasserman (2008) also proposes an approach that would "incorporate ('global') ethical notions of fairness, credibility, and truth-telling into a framework that acknowledges the ('local') socio-economic conditions under which such notions are lived out" (p. 83). Wasserman (2008) argues that "As an interventionist approach, a postcolonial media ethics would include the imperative for media to contribute to the redress of past injustices, with human dignity as a positive value towards which the media should actively strive. In other words, media would be given positive duties to help create the conditions under which people can regain and sustain their dignity" (p. 83).

## **AGENDA-SETTING THEORY**

McCombs and Shaw (1972) have hypothesised that by providing the public with cues about the significance of various political issues, media coverage exerts a strong influence on the relative importance the public attaches to an issue. Vargo and Guo (2017) argued that "traditional agenda setting theory focuses on the transfer of salience of discreet issues and attributes that are considered important among the public which describes the first and second level of agenda setting theory" (p. 1033). McCombs (2005) also argued that "Both traditional agenda-setting effects and attribute agenda-setting effects involve the transfer of salience [...] called the first and second levels of agenda setting, [...] elements prominent on the media agenda become prominent over time on the public agenda" (p. 545). It is expected that the issues reported in the media will have fair chances of getting on the agenda of both the public and policy makers whereas the issues missing in media remain unnoticed and unseen

McCombs (2005) argues that the "transmission of object and attribute salience from the press to the public about issues, political figures and other topics has significant consequences

for people's attitudes and opinions; [...]: forming an opinion, priming opinions about public figures through an emphasis on issues, and shaping an opinion through an emphasis on attributes" (p. 548). Faced with an information overload, the media select the events or stories to be covered, which are then presented as news to the public. The news media focus attention on issues they deem newsworthy and give these issues prominence. The media invariably influence how decisions concerning the problem are taken and the choices people make. The mass media set the agenda for the public to follow, discuss and take actions upon. Riffe et al. (2005) argue that "under natural, non-laboratory field conditions, members of the audience [...] used media and messages for their own individual purposes, chose what parts of messages-if any-to attend, and rejected much that was inconsistent with their existing attitudes, beliefs, and values" (p. 7). The decisions people take about media contents depend on their interests and the benefits they will derive from the information.

Consequently, elements prominent on the media agenda become prominent in the public mind. The agenda-setting influence of the news media is not necessarily restricted to grabbing the audience's attention towards a specific issue. The media agenda plays a pivotal role in determining the public agenda. White (2010) argues that "the journalist can only set the agenda of public information but knowing how to set that agenda and when to release it to the public is the genius of the professional journalist—or rather the expert media organization" (p. 49). Whether social or political, local or national, public issues are generated by the media, which depending on the importance they attach to such issues shape and determine how the public will react to the issue. The agenda-setting theory maintains that the media play an influential part in how issues gain public attention. The media shape public opinion and by giving salience to these issues the public might perceive those issues as more important than others.

The role of the media in setting the agenda is therefore not detached from societal and cultural pressures as well as the idiosyncrasies, attitudes, and internalised value systems of the public. The media are expected to raise awareness of issues of public concern like the Boko Haram conflict and do everything possible to ensure that the public gets the right information to enable them to make informed decisions. Tobechukwu (2007) argues that the “the agenda-setting theory implies that the mass media pre-determine what issues are regarded as important at any given time in a given society [and] does not ascribe to the media power to determine what the public thinks, but to them the power to determine what the people should be thinking about” (p. 64). The agenda-setting function of the mass media is an important aspect of the institutional linkage between the mass media and politics (Umechukwu, 2001).

Riffe et al. (2005) argue that “real world audience members’ decision to accept, adopt, or learn a message was a function of their existing psychological and social characteristics and not necessarily of mere exposure to, perhaps, the manipulated, artificial credibility of a source trying to persuade them as part of an experimental treatment” (p. 8). McCombs and Reynolds (2009) also argue that “an important part of the news agenda and its set of objects are the attributes that journalists and, subsequently, members of the public have in mind when they think about and talk about each object” (p. 10). Njamnjoh (2006) similarly argues that “media effects are neither direct, simple, nor immediate, the audience, by extension, is neither altogether passive nor helpless, since members of the same demographic often get different messages from the same source” (p. 1). Also, Gordon et al. (2011) argue that “news [...] is inevitably shaped by the perspectives, ideologies, and life experiences of the gatekeepers, [...] ideas or groups that lie outside our experiences and beliefs may never make it past the ‘gates’ that screen the communications we produce” (p. 131). The sources that therefore shape the media’s agenda range from official sources, private sector and the idiosyncrasies of journalists (Roberts & McCombs, 2010).



British media academics like Philo and Berry (2004) also focused attention on critical and cultural studies and their implications on the media and relationship to power. Philo and Berry (2004) argued that an analysis of media content remains a prime concern because “the media are central to the exercise of power in society, they can set agendas in the sense of highlighting some news stories and topics, [and] they can also severely limit the information with which we understand events in the world” (p. 94). Baran and Davis, (2007) similarly examined the role of the media in promoting a hegemonic worldview and a dominant culture among various subgroups in a society. Norris (1997) found that journalists commonly work with gendered ‘frames’ to simplify, prioritize, and structure the narrative flow of events when covering women and men in public life.

The news media by this agenda-setting role determine what and how stories are reported. Ozoemena (2017) argues that the news media “have the prerogative of choosing what cues to disseminate to the public [which] goes beyond ‘what’ to disseminate [...] ‘how’ the information is brought to the attention of the public; [...] the perspective or slant given to the information is entirely the mass media’s decision [which] is carried out through agenda setting” (p. 27). This however is not the case as exemplified by most Nigerian journalists. Jibo and Okoosi-Simbine (2003) argue that “the media is a powerful instrumentality and agency for setting and executing its own agenda for its own target audience [which] include[s] deliberate suppression of otherwise critical issues of public interest, gross diversion of public attention, selective target of issues and/or personalities for public and national discourses, and deliberate foisting upon the public of images as well as contents about public policy” (p. 191).

A major debate about how the relationship between different media affect each other emerged as a possible answer to the question ‘who sets the media agenda?’ ‘Referred to as inter-media agenda setting, McCombs and Shaw (1976) described inter-media agenda setting as the fourth stage of agenda-setting theory that explained how content is transferred between diverse

news media (Atwater et al. 1987; and Harder et al., 2017). Inter-media agenda setting therefore happens when prominent news media influence other less influential media outlets (Vliegenthart and Walgrave, 2008) because as Harder et al. (2017) argued “journalists are more inclined to follow up the coverage of media with a high stature” (p. 289). Vonbun et al. (2016) identified some of the factors that influence inter-media agenda-setting as:

The structures of journalism; [...] by the production cycle of news; [...] some media outlets are followed because of their role in the media system; [...] the nature of the issue discussed – where it originates and is localized – may single out some media outlets as agenda-setters; [...] and the obtrusiveness of the issue will also affect inter-media agenda-setting (p. 1055).

Harder et al. (2017) explained that the relationship between different news media organizations are follow ups “on or simply replicating others’ content (churnalism) [which] requires less resources and [...] therefore more cost-effective than seeking one’s own leads” (p. 277). Relying on other news media’s coverage can guide other less influential media organizations about issues that are important and worth mentioning in their bulletins (Harder et al., 2017). Vonbun et al. (2016), however, argued that “There is not one single media outlet with the power to dominate the agenda of all others; [...] instead, journalists appear to pay attention to those of their colleagues with the best local knowledge and contacts, which should result in a higher quality of media reporting (p. 1067).

Over the years, a few studies have empirically supported the evidence of inter-media agenda-setting (Breed 1955; McCombs & Shaw, 1976; Reese & Danielian, 1989; Lopez-Escobar et al., 1998; and McCombs, 2005). These scholars have examined the influence that the news agendas of different news organizations have on each other. In an agenda setting context, researchers have assessed the ability media have to influence each other in terms of salience of coverage. Breed’s (1955) research has shown that junior newspaper reporters often

mimic the coverage of more senior journalists and journalists at larger organizations. He described the process as “arterial in nature, starting from larger arteries and spreading out throughout to smaller media” (p. 277). McCombs and Shaw (1976) found correlation between numerous sources and news media which support the notion of fourth-stage agenda setting. Another study by Gilbert et al. (1980) found the New York Times to be a leader in inter-media agenda setting, signalling important news and issues for other gatekeepers across the nation. McCombs (2005) asked: “If the press sets the public agenda, who sets the media agenda? [and argued that] the pattern of news coverage that defines the media agenda results from the norms and traditions of journalism, the daily interactions among news organizations themselves, and the continuous interactions of news organizations with numerous sources and their agendas” (p. 548).

Reese and Danielian (1989) established a link between newspapers and television networks. Protest and McCombs (1991) found that elite newspapers influence the news agendas of local news media. Lee (2004) examined the influence of traditional newspapers on the news agenda of four online newspapers and found that traditional newspapers have more of an inter-media agenda-setting effect than online newspapers. Lim (2006) also identified an inter-media agenda-setting effect as two Korean online newspapers influenced the issue agendas of a wire service. Sweetser et al. (2008) argued that “these examples illustrate that inter-media agenda setting has come to refer to both within- and between-channel agenda-setting effects” (p. 198). McCombs (2005) suggested that elite journalists have special power in the inter-media agenda-setting process:

Journalists routinely look over their shoulders to validate their sense of news by observing the work of their colleagues, especially the work of elite members of the press, such as the New York Times, Washington Post (p. 549).

Vargo and Guo (2017) conducted an analysis of inter-media agenda setting of US online media sources for 2015 and found that “media agendas were highly homogeneous and reciprocal [and that] Inter-media agenda setting effects varied by media type, issue type, and time periods” (p. 1031). McCombs (2004) referred to the relationship between source-media agenda setting the ‘fourth stage’ of agenda setting which examines how media content influences other media contents (Sweetser et al., 2008). Studies (Reese & Danielian, 1989; Shoemaker & Reese 1991; and McCombs, 2004) examining how the media’s agenda is shaped have found that ‘sources’ shape news reports more than journalists and that news sources could have a strong effect on the content of the news media. Lee et al. (2005) argued that “in inter-media agenda-setting, one medium is considered as one of the various sources that can affect another medium’s agenda” (p. 57).

The influence of inter-media news agenda can also be found in the coverage of international news. While previous research has examined international news flows and coverage and focused on gate keeping or event-oriented factors, not many have investigated inter-media agenda setting as a likely factor influencing international news selection (Golan, 2006). Golan (2006) argued that “the newsworthiness of international news coverage may not only result from gatekeepers’ assessment of country-based or event-based variables [...] but rather might be influenced by the international news agendas of other media sources [and] suggests that the inter-media agenda-setting process might have some influence on the international news selection process” (p. 323). Studies (Breen, 1997; Lopez-Escobar et al., 1998; McCombs, 2005; Golan, 2006; and Vargo & Guo, 2017) have shown that news media can set each other’s agenda across various media platforms depending on the issues and events. These scholars have provided further evidence that elite news media exert an inter-media agenda-setting role over other news media.

## **FRAMING THEORY**

This study also builds on theory of framing as propounded by Goffman (1974). Framing is one of the media effects theories, largely used to analyse how the mass-media filters information to the public (de Vreese, 2005). This study is also anchored on this theory to explain how the Nigerian news media represented women in the Boko Haram conflict. This is premised on the assumptions that how a problem is perceived by the public is a function of how the media highlights it. The media invariably influences how decisions concerning an issue or a problem are taken, and the choices people make through framing (Philo & Berry, 2004). Therefore, news content analysis which is one of the methods used in this research is essential to studying the pattern of frames used by the Nigerian news media to represent women in the conflict. Some scholars have therefore referred to frames as theories (Fairhurst & Sarr, 1996; and Ezegwu et al, 2017). The basis for framing theory is that the media focus attention on certain events and place them within a field of meaning and interpretation to the public (Ezegwu et al. 2017). Framing theory is relevant to this study because it explains how media representations of an event contribute in shaping people's perceptions.

This theory is like the agenda-setting theory (Fairhurst et al, 1996) because they both focus on how media draws the public's eye to specific topics. But framing takes this a step further in the way in which the news is presented which creates a frame for that information. de Vreese (2005) argues that "while agenda-setting theory deals with the salience of issues, framing is concerned with the presentation of issues" (p. 53). Certain characteristics of an object may resonate with the public to the extent of becoming persuasive arguments for the salience of the issue, person or topic under consideration (McCombs, 2004). Entman's (1993) definition of news frames highlights the salience of an issue where he argues that to frame is "to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation

and/or treatment recommendation for the item described” (p. 52). While frame-setting or second-level agenda-setting is related to the salience of issue attributes, agenda-setting is primarily concerned with the salience of issues (Scheufele, 2007; McCombs et al., 1997). Entman (2007) explains that agenda-setting performs the first function of framing by defining problems that are worth the public’s or government’s attention. The core proposition for these two stages, is that elements prominent on the media agenda become prominent over time on the public agenda (Iyengar, 1991; Ghanem, 1996; Maslog et al, 2006; and Scheufele, 2007).

News frames have similarly been described as central organizing ideas, phrases, images and principles that highlight what an issue is by giving meaning to it through news selection and exclusion (Gamson & Modigliani, 1987; Tankard et al, 1991; and Kitzinger, 2007). News frames help journalists to organise words and phrases into coherent information in the communication process. Building on Entman, (1993), Ndlela (2005) explained that the media picks an aspect of an event, issue or subject and gives it prominence by shrinking and selecting certain features of complex issues, events and objects and simplifying them for the audience. Framing affects the news in the choice of topics, sources, language, and photographs. Public or policy makers regularly pay attention to information based on how the news story is positioned on the pages of newspapers. If the media give much airtime or space (in a repetitive manner) to an issue or event, it is seen by information consumers as very important (Baran, 2001).

Ezeah and Emmanuel (2016) explained that media contents represent different realities about an incident, group or people which are “framed, presented, packaged and organised in a manner that would either elicit negative or positive feelings from the target audiences” (p.33). Hall (1997) however argued that these realities can also be misrepresented by the media. This misrepresentation can be perceived to be the truth if the media continue to bombard their audience with biased information in environment with limited access to diverse sources of

information due to high rate of illiteracy and lack of infrastructure (Ezeah and Emmanuel, 2016). This problem is evident in the conflict zone of North east Nigeria where the illiteracy rates are high where 72 per cent of children around the ages of 6–16 never attended schools in Borno State (National Population Commission, 2008; and National Bureau of Statistics, 2012). Framing effect is also not as powerful as it is perceived. This is because it is dependent on an audience's preconceived ideas about an issue or event (Auerbach & Bloch-Elkon, 2005). This means that the effect of news framing is dependent on an audience predispositions and other external factors. In other words, what people make of media contents depends, on where their vested interests lie.

An important issue in media frames is the angle they give to an issue, occurrence or event. Whether an item appears on the front page of a newspaper or at the opening of a television news broadcast, is placed in the lead or buried in a later paragraph, reflects the importance which the media attribute to an issue and subsequently affects its significance for the public (Cohen, 1997). Framing assumes that subtle changes in the wordings of an issues might affect how audience members think about it. Similarly, the way journalists interpret conflicts may also affect how the audience interpret such information. Maslog et al. (2006) argued that “news is not a simple reflection of a conflict but is shaped by a press’ construction of the conflict for a society” (p. 22). Research (Eti, 2012; Gwadabe, 2015; Okoro and Odoemelam, 2013) found that news dealing with unrest and crises, like the Boko Haram insurgence in Nigeria, influence public perceptions and concerns.

Some scholars (Entman, 1993; Carragee & Roefs, 2004; Deacon et al., 2007; Kitzinger, 2007; and Ezeah & Emmanuel, 2016) have identified some limitations in framing analysis ranging from conceptual inconsistencies to its fractured nature. Carragee and Roefs (2004) identified a range of conceptual inconsistencies by researchers’ attempts to define frames and argued that the concept of framing is often used loosely “with little or no reference to its

theoretical or substantive implications” (p. 217). Although frames are often reduced and equated to headlines, positioning of stories, as well as its negative and positive portrayals of reported sources, Deacon et al. (2007) argued that this “reduction ignores the ways in which frames construct particular meanings and how they advance specific ways of seeing issues” (p.164). It similarly disregards how specific frames are applied to many issues, the conceptual nature, the significance of the framing procedure and the power relationships that influence the process (Deacon et al., 2007). Entman (1993) highlighted the fractured nature of frame analysis which is evident in methodological terms where there is no single, definitive method as a result researcher adopt the qualitative and quantitative textual approaches which this study has done. Another major limitation of frames Ezeah and Emmanuel (2016) argued is that “when media continue to bombard their audience with a single perspective, by emphasising continually on some aspects of reality and downplay [...] others, such misrepresentation may soon become the only reality that the audience can reckon with” (p. 36). In his study on the reporting of the Niger Delta crisis in Nigerian newspapers, Ayoola (2008) also argued that “several news items are deliberately omitted, under-reported, or over-reported by media organisations” (p. 3) and cited instances of abuse of media access through fabrications of stories which are fed to the public. Despite these limitations, this study will also use framing analysis to determine how Nigerian news media represented women in the Boko Haram conflict.

## **MEDIA REPRESENTATIONS**

To understand how the Nigerian news media covered the Boko Haram conflict in relation to women, there is the need to unpack and conceptualise media representations. Tobechukwu (2007) argues that “decisions made by media professionals determine what information becomes available to the media audiences; [...] by putting stories into perspective and interpreting them, media personnel assign meaning to information and indicate the values by



which it ought to be judged” (p. 190). This is carried out through representations. McQueen (1998) refers to representation as:

an image, likeness or reproduction of something in the ‘real’ world. It may be an object, person, group or event that has been represented, or mediated in some way. With a written text this mediation is clear to see. With media such as tapes the representation appears to resemble far more closely our own experience of reality” (p. 139).

The media make representations using symbols which are easily recognizable (McQueen, 1998). Images, symbols, and narratives in radio, television, film, music, and other media play important roles in what the audiences know or care about. The media could be described as helping to construct versions of reality in socio-political discourse. Macdonald (2003) argued that “it is not always possible to have access to the truth and even if one does, it is often evaded or distorted by participants whose human foibles often affect their positive or negative presentation of events and happenings; [...] an attempt to investigate the truthfulness of media representation can produce only a wild goose chase (pp. 14 & 17). Brooks and Hebert (2006) also argued that “in our consumption-oriented, mediated society, much of what comes to pass as important is based often on the stories produced and disseminated by media institutions” (p. 297). Corroborating this, Pickering (2011) argued that “all newspapers are mosaics of narrative and representation whose different elements appear formally unrelated to each other, yet at the same time they are composed both on single pages and, subject to various editorial decisions that are driven by particular news values and broader commercial imperatives” (p. 97). The media are therefore fundamental to issues and constructs that represent social realities.

Representations can be influenced by either editorial policies, media owners’ interests, commercial considerations, cultural, religious or political factors. According to Burton (1990 cited in McQueen 1998: 141) “the media are responsible for the representational social groups

by building certain types of people, made up of repeated elements such as appearance and behaviour. These elements carry meanings about character, relationships and about how we are meant to view and value the types” (p. 141). How women are treated in the society reflects their representations in the news media. Byerly (2004) argued that “feminist criticisms of the [invisibility of women in] news (and to a large extent also other mass media) [...] has the effect of reinforcing women’s marginality through what Tuchman (1978) referred to as ‘symbolic annihilation of women’” (pp. 110-111). Tuchman (1981) observed that even though much has changed in the media landscape since the 1970s, the problem of ‘symbolic annihilation’ persists and it limits women’s possibilities and opportunities while discouraging them to enlarge their life horizons (p. 16). The media therefore give meaning to issues through representations. Hall (1986) argued:

The media have the power to represent the world in certain ways. And because there are so many different and conflicting ways in which meaning about the world can be constructed, it matters profoundly what and who gets left out, and how things, people, events, relationships are represented; [...] All representations contain only a fraction of what could have been presented, thus all are selective abstractions (pp. 9 - 10).

The news media supply their audiences with information about issues so that audiences can make decisions based on this. The media therefore give meaning to issues through representation. Bridges and Brunt (1981) described a media product as “representations of the social world, images, descriptions, explanations and frames for understanding how the world is and why it works as it is said and shown to work” (p. 138). Butler (1999) also argued that “while politics and representation serve as the operative term within a political process that seeks to extend visibility and legitimacy to women as political subjects, representation is the normative function of a language which is said either to reveal or to distort what is assumed to be true about the category of women” (p. 3). Millet (2005) wrote: “as the history of patriarchal

culture and the representations of herself within all levels of its cultural media, past and present, have a devastating effect upon her self-image, [the woman] is customarily deprived of any but the most trivial sources of dignity or self-respect” (p. 53). Media representations of women therefore reflect the dominant social values which not only denigrate them but are portrayed in restrictive stereotypical roles (van Zoonen, 1994).

Van Zoonen’s (1994) arguments can be applied to the objectification of women and the reduction of the female into a sex symbol only fit for the male gaze by the Nigerian news media which has remained the norm. The Nigerian *Daily Sun* newspaper’s ‘page 3’ girl with scantily dressed attire readily comes to mind. Nigerian movies are also guilty of objectifying and sexualising the woman. They are often portrayed in these movies as seductresses and greedy. Anyanwu (2001) aptly captured this objectification in the following account about the late wife of the former Nigerian President, General Olusegun Obasanjo (1999-2007):

“The Punch, the widest circulating daily in Nigeria, did something savvy October 20. On the cover, Stella, the gorgeous wife of President Obasanjo, was stepping out for an occasion with two equally gorgeously dressed women. There was no detail on where they went; no words heard from them. No stories. Just big colour pictures. In this edition, women made the cover, back page, and seven other pages; [...] a content analysis of mainstream media in Nigeria reveals one dominant orientation: women are largely seen and not heard. Their faces adorn newspapers. However, on important national and international issues, they fade out. Even when the news is about them, the story only gains real prominence if there is a male authority figure or newsmaker on the scene” (p. 68).

Nwagbara (2005) argued that, “stories read about women concern mainly the wives of political office holders, the few women who occupy political offices, and the images of those portrayed as sex objects or even the fashion crazy” (p. 35). The result of which is a minimized

focus on the involvement of women in the political and economic arena, which serves to increase the vulnerability of women and makes them voiceless. This underrepresentation/misrepresentation has limited the capacity of the woman to participate in the public space. At the root of the underrepresentation/misrepresentation of women in the news media is the influence of culture and tradition (Anyanwu, 2001; Ajayi, 2007; and Okome, 2002). Ozoemena (2017) argued that “women have been in a disadvantaged position for a very long time, a position which is strongly reinforced by the patriarchal nature of our society [with] the traditional roles of women as wives, mothers and producers [...] fostered through certain societal practices” (p. 25). The traditional roles assigned to women by the society as wives, mothers, daughters, sisters-in-law and mothers-in-law revolve round men. In the news media, stories about women are often biased and they only get mentioned in a positive light when there is a ‘male authority figure’ as the news maker (Anyanwu, 2001; and Nwagbara, 2005). This strong socio-cultural orientation and mind set are reflected in Nigerian newspapers. Stereotypes are usually based on bias which can be detrimental, especially if they are negative. People tend to remember information that supports a stereotype but may not recall any that contradicts their stereotype (Hamilton, Sherman & Rurvol, 1990).

Studies by (Nwaolikpe, 2014; Christopher, 2016; and Ozoemena, 2017) on gender have brought to limelight the level of disparity and discrimination against women in Nigeria. Findings from a study by Christopher (2016) on gender representation in the editorial and reportorial staff of newspapers in Nigeria suggested that there is a “huge male domination of the editorial cum reportorial units of newspapers in Nigeria” (p. 18). Another study on gender reporting in selected Nigerian newspapers by Ozoemena (2017) found that “the female gender group is under-reported in the selected newspapers compared to the male gender group” (p. 1). This result according to Ozoemena (2017) highlighted the extent of the misrepresentation and underrepresentation of women in the society. Nwaolikpe (2014) conducted a study on the

representation of women's images in Nigerian newspapers and found that "the photographic images of women in the print media are portrayed negatively which undermine the status of the African woman today depicting the Nigerian women negatively, confining them to areas traditionally meant for them and reinforcing gender discrimination and stereotype" (p. 41). The study also found that images analysed did not show women as successful businesswomen or professionals, but women's images were seen in advertisements for beauty, technology/network, health products, in sports and assault/victims (Nwaolikpe, 2014). This study suggested that the pictures of women centre on their domesticity and sexuality which objectifies them as beauty products. Findings from these studies demonstrate that stories and images of women in the Nigerian news media centre on their domesticity and sexuality. This again highlights women's objectification in the media.

The news media are also complicit in reinforcing the underrepresentation/misrepresentation of women in conflict reporting. Despite its power and reach, rarely does media coverage of war include the experiences and perspectives of women, beyond stereotypical images of women as passive victims and refugees (Novikau, 2017; Byerly & Ross, 2004; Maslog et. al., 2006; and Lemish, 2006). Lemish (2006) argues that "despite acknowledgement by the UN, world media portrayals of war and conflict remain heavily dominated by patriarchal and colonial logic" (p. 275). Key actors in conflicts are mostly men, unfortunately women who are mostly victims are not given the adequate representation by the news media. Even though women are not the instigators of genocide, terrorism or war, they have remained victims of violent acts including rape and domestic abuse (United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, 2002), which often accompany other forms of violence.

Rodgers (2003) argued that "little has been written about gender and the reporting of crises and conflicts [which can be located within] the context of patriarchy and the notion that

men represent ‘manliness, masculinity, maleness [while] women were constructed first as victims of the attacks’ (p. 201). Novikau (2017) also argued that early studies on the relationship between war and gender were “mostly gender blind [but] even when they are included in studies in later years, they were seen as “civilian victims, not engaged in battles [while] men were usually described as the only active participants in war” (p. 315). It is therefore not surprising that little has been heard about how women who are the major victims in this conflict are represented in the news media which reinforces the patriarchal nature of African societies.

The nature of news production and media culture is also gendered (Lobo et al., 2017). Despite making more room for female journalists due to the need for human interest stories, this has created new dilemmas for them (van Zoonen, 1998). van Zoonen (1998) argued that “on the one hand they have to show that despite being women they are good journalists, but on the other hand they have to show that despite being journalists they are still real women too” (p. 45). Lobo et al., (2017) also argued that “despite the increasing number of female journalists in newsrooms, women are still seen as outsiders by their male colleagues [which] happens because journalism practices are deeply rooted in a male-centred professional culture” (p. 1150). Building on Hallin and Mancini (2004) who argued that journalism should be studied by paying attention to the cultural domain, Yusha’u (2012) argued that “attention should be paid to the cultural orientation of the journalists who produce the news [because] in reporting other cultures, journalists are likely to be influenced by their own cultural background” (p. 94). Pickering (2011) also explained that the way reporting occurs follows age-old standards. The cultural orientation of a journalist affects the way news is reported and reflected in the news agenda set by the news media.

This lop-sidedness is further compounded by the low number of women in key decision-making positions in the country’s media industry. This study argues that the

underrepresentation/misrepresentation of women in the media persists because, apart from societal support of gender disparity, men still dominate the media industry. Gibbons (2005) argues that “women [...] with authoritative views [about] the world are neither seen nor heard” (p. 1). Creedon and Cramer (2007) also argue that “the people who make decisions about media content, [...] have defining power [...] a lack of women in media should be a serious problem for modern democratic media around the world” (p. 35). Steeves (1987) similarly explains that in developing countries where two thirds of the world’s women live, they experience more harm because of patriarchal ownership and control of the media. Highlighting this discrepancy, White (2009) argues that despite the steady rise of women working in the media globally, editorial, top management and ownership of the news media are still monopolised by men particularly in Africa. Despite overall historic gains and pockets of progress, women in journalism lag when it comes to leading and heading media organizations. Men remain the major news definers. Men also make the hiring and firing decisions in most media outlets. For example, the boards of trustees and management staff of some of the newspapers selected for this study like *Daily Sun*, *This Day*, and *Daily Trust* newspaper have 80% men as members. Lobo et al. (2017) argues that “even though the number of female journalists has been increasing (the so-called ‘feminization’ of the profession), this has not improved women’s equal participation in media or gender balance within media content” (p. 1149).

From the political economy of media representations and the impact of ownership and control, the root of the problem might be related to what Creedon (1993) refers to as “hard core economic facts of the situation or position in which the mass media find themselves” (p. 13). As a capital intensive, profit-driven and advertising-supported practice, it is the owners of the news media who are predominantly men that dictate the recruitment, management and media content. As a result, women are often at a disadvantage when it comes to recruitment, managerial positions and media contents. Scholars (Hanitzsch & Hanusch, 2012; and

Gallagher, 2001) are however of the view that the number of women in management positions is not enough to change their underrepresentation/misrepresentation but other predisposing factors must be considered. In their survey of male and female journalists in 18 countries across the world Hanitzsch & Hanusch (2012) conclude that “men’s and women’s opinions and attitudes towards their jobs do not differ significantly by gender which suggests that the lack of difference means that newsroom culture will not necessarily change if more female journalists are employed” (p. 11). Gallagher (2001) also argues that women’s representation cannot be improved by increasing the number of women journalists alone, but by social and political transformation.

## **LABELLING**

A major feature of news media underrepresentation/misrepresentations of women is the perpetuation of labelling of women by society. The Oxford English Dictionary (2018) defined label as “a classifying phrase or name applied to a person or thing, especially one that is inaccurate or restrictive” (p. 1). The Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (2018) also defined label as “a word or phrase which is used to describe a person, group, or thing, but which is unfair or not correct” (p. 1). Tannenbaum (1938) who first introduced the idea of 'tagging' while conducting his studies with delinquent youths found that a negative tag or label often contributed to further involvement in delinquent activities which may cause the individual to adopt it as part of their identity. The crux of Tannenbaum's argument is that the greater the attention placed on this label, the more likely the person is to identify themselves as the label. In a research on the representation of the Niger Delta crisis in the Nigerian press, Chilwa (2011) observed that the pattern of labelling “produces a highly negative characterisation of the key players in the crisis” (p. 11). Labels are often used by dominant groups to oppress the weak, with resultant negative effect on the labelled. Memmi (1965) described the deep psychological effects of the social stigma created by the domination of one group over another:



The longer the oppression lasts, the more profoundly it affects him (the oppressed). It ends by becoming so familiar to him that he believes it is part of his own constitution, that he accepts it and could not imagine his recovery from it. This acceptance is the crowning point of oppression (p. 321 -322).

Zewis (2014 cited in Abeer, 2014) highlighted the effects of labelling women caught in conflicts and wars as victims and advises journalists covering conflicts to treat women as “survivors, not as victims” (p. 22). The National Union of Journalists (NUJ) in the United Kingdom also argued that “In the case of an attack that has not resulted in death, do not use the word ‘victim’ unless the woman self-identifies as one. If she has survived the attack, she is a ‘survivor’” (p. 22). Similarly, the former High Commissioner for Human Rights, Mary Robinson told a 1999 IAWRT Biennial conference that refugees are not victims – they are survivors displaced by violent conflict. Other labels ranging from ‘prostitute’, ‘loose’, ‘beggars’, and ‘political singers’ and ‘hangers-on’ to represent women by the Nigerian news media also reflect the level of the stereotypical phrases used in misrepresenting them (Abeer, 2014). The mass media perpetuate violence against women through the reinforcement of negative stereotypes of domesticity, victimhood and subordination. This is often carried out using labels to describe women affected by the Boko Haram conflict.

## **SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY MODEL OF THE PRESS**

The social responsibility model is rooted in the assumption that because of their importance to society, journalists have the obligation to discharge their duties responsibly (Siebert et al., 1956). Gunaratne and Hasim (1996) outlined six essential functions of the mass media in contemporary society that are extracted from the social responsibility model as proposed by Siebert et al. (1956). They included: servicing the political system; enlightening the public; safeguarding the rights of the individual; servicing the economic system; providing entertainment; and maintaining its own financial self-sufficiency (Gunaratne & Hasim, 1996).

Explaining the social responsibility model, Siebert et al. (1956) argued that the model demands of the media to give equal time or allocate equal pages to news makers no matter their inclination. It is within the basic characteristics of objectivity, fairness and truth of social responsibility model that journalists attempt to perform these roles.

This approach places more emphasis on the responsibility of the media to society than on the freedom of the press. White (2010) argued that “the media are the major instruments for creating a public that is knowledgeable about governance, for representing civil society proposals for monitoring and evaluating public services and for active participation in political decisions” (p. 64). Rao (2008) also argued that “Social responsibility theory emphasises impartiality, tolerance, guidance, responsibility, pride, and decency” (p. 100). For the press to be free and perform essential functions of the media, it must abide by corresponding obligations by being socially responsible. McQuail (2010) outlined basic tenets of this theory as: obligations to society; media ownership is a public trust; news media should be free but self-regulated; the media should follow agreed codes of ethics and professional conduct; and under some circumstances, government may need to intervene to safeguard the public interest. Responsibility demands objectivity, fairness and adherence to professional codes of ethics. Nwabeuze (2010) argued that this theory “connotes a watchdog press that factors in public trust in exercise of the freedom to practice their profession” (p. 564). The news media are therefore expected to uphold the principles of objectivity like factuality, fairness, neutrality and balance (Mwesige, 2004) and to be socially responsible.

In the social responsibility conception of the role of the media, journalists are expected to report the performance of elected officials and other public services so that the public may be able to evaluate these services and act where necessary (Christians, et al., 2009). Mpagaze and White (2010) argued that “In [...] Africa, citizens are perceived as having a right to the services of education, health, employment or other services necessary for a human existence.

Citizens also have the right to correct information about the state of public services and the causes of better or worse service, [while] journalists are expected to constantly monitor whether these human and civil rights are being respected” (p. 612). This watchdog role of the journalist is difficult in Africa because of the often-political culture that tends to function outside legalities with no accountability to the public (Chabal & Daloz, 1999). Scholars (Young, 1994; Ogbondah 1994, 2002; Chibita, 2010; Matumaini, 2010) attributed part of this problem to the colonial legacy bequeathed to Africa, which was only accountable to the colonial overseas office, but not to the natives. In Nigeria for example, the Official Secret Acts of 1963 was one of such laws that was enacted by the British colonial administration to muzzle the press under the guise of protecting official secrets.

The question is despite the demand placed on journalists to be socially responsible, how do you measure the responsibility and how do you draw the line between media autonomy and independence, on the one hand, and the need to be accountable to society, on the other? What constitutes social responsibility in the face of market forces and other media challenges? Bivins (2004) argues that “It is clear, therefore, that a certain level of responsibility is owed society by the news media; but exactly to what degree are the media expected to give up their traditional autonomy to serve the public interest (or cater to its needs)? [...] What level of responsibility can the media accept before they lose the autonomy, they need to remain fair and balanced”? (p. 44). There is no gainsaying the fact that the news media is under a lot of pressure. Even the very nature of media practice is under immense pressure of deadlines and demands of its owners. It is very difficult if not impossible for the Nigerian news media to be objective in their news reportage due to the interests and influence of their owners, governments and politicians among other pressures.

This is further compounded by the widespread distrust of Nigerian journalists by the public and even those in government circles. Esuh (2008) conducted a study of the public trust

in election reporting in the 2007 elections in Nigeria and found that there is dissatisfaction with the bias toward the incumbent party shown by journalists, especially in government-controlled media. Ayoola (2008) argued that no matter how hard media organisations claim to be objective in their presentations, “their reporting of political issues are often slanted in favour of one of the sides [and that] several news items are deliberately omitted, under-reported, or over-reported by media organisations” (pp. 161 & 163). Wasserman (2008) also argued that “if the media professes to be guided by the principles of freedom and human dignity, it should be held accountable to those principles” (p. 77). The question of social responsibility of the news media is therefore subject to these forces and the extent to which the news media are expected to perform this obligation in Nigeria largely depends on them. Suffice it to argue that despite these pressures, African governments expect journalists to perform the social responsibility role within the ambits of development journalism.

## **DEVELOPMENT JOURNALISM**

The concept of development journalism was first coined in Asia in 1968 (Romano 2005; Hadland, 2012; and Slavtcheva- Petkova & Bromley, 2018). Slavtcheva- Petkova and Bromley (2018) had argued that “historically, African newspapers and journalists, were at the forefront of battle for the liberation of their countries from colonial powers [...] in the post-colonial era, African leaders advocated a new role for the press; [...] a significant extension- of government and its policies of social, economic, and cultural development” (p. 36). As the poorest continent in the world, battling infrastructural decay, famine, epidemics, corruption, and underdevelopment which have affected journalistic practice, African leaders placed a demand on their news media to be advocates of nation building (Obijiofor & Hanutsch, 2011; Slavtcheva-Petkova & Bromley, 2018). Hadland (2012) argued that “the notion of development journalism was [...] initially proposed as a new method of investigative journalism that focused on state-led development programs and policies” (p. 107). Hallin and Mancini (2012) also

explained that “development journalism is defined in terms of lack of autonomy from the state. Yet it does include a conception of public service, and it has some parallels to the deferential, consensual forms of professionalism often found in the west [...] when the journalist was often seen as the supportive proponent of modernization and progress” (p. 291).

Development journalism gained currency in Africa when it became one of the issues championed by heads of states of developing nations during the New World Information Order (NWICO) debate in 1978. NWICO was the first organized movement to correct the news imbalance in existing patterns of the global information system (Boyd-Barrett & Thussu, 1992). Its protagonists argued that through control and manipulation of major international information channels, the Western media portray an exploitative and distorted view of the developing world (Boyd-Barrett & Thussu, 1992). Advocates of NWICO argued that the problems facing developing nations like Africa required journalists to cooperate with their governments by writing stories that focus on development journalism (Boyd-Barrett & Thussu, 1992).

Shafer (1991) described development communication as the “art and science of human communication applied to the speedy transformation of a country and the mass of its people from poverty to a dynamic state of economic growth that makes possible greater social equality and the larger fulfilment of the human potential” (p. 22). Ward (2008) argued that “development journalism was contrasted with a western liberal press model, with its principles of independence, objectivity, and neutrality; [and] noble goals: to use media to develop countries with weak economies and serious social problems; to build social solidarity and allow people to take control of their lives” (p. 51). Edeani (1993) also argued that “[it] is the kind of journalism which pays sustained attention to the coverage of ideas, policies, programs, activities and events dealing with the improvement of the life of a people: it takes the stand that the media have a social responsibility to promote development (p. 126). Development

journalists are expected to report events of national and international significance constructively that will contribute positively to the development of the country concerned (Kunczik, 1988). Also, Musa and Domatob (2007) argued:

Development journalists are expected to partner with the government and policies in the effort to improve the quality of life of the people. Development journalism's central philosophy is that journalists and national leaders are citizens who share the common goal of building a progressive and peaceful society. The role of the journalist is to advocate and support policies that are in the interest of the society (p. 321).

Central to development journalism therefore is constructive news reportage with a focus on policies and programmes that can improve the people's lives while placing a demand on journalists to be socially responsible (Kunczik, 1988; Edeani, 1993; Musa & Domatob, 2007). Advocates of development journalism tried to emphasize its distinctiveness and set it apart from the dominant Western approach of promoting truth, social responsibility, freedom of expression, objectivity, advancing societal good and protecting professional integrity (Christians & Nordestreng, 2004; Cooper, 1990; Musa & Domatob 2007). Romano (2005) who compared development journalism in Africa to the type practiced in Asia identified 4 models of development journalism: Journalists as nation builders; 'Asian values' approach; journalists as agents of empowerment; and journalists as watchdogs. Slatcheva-Petkova & Bromley (2018) argued that "both the empowerment and the watchdog models [...] encourage investigative reporting and are more adversarial than the nation builders and the Asian values approaches" (p. 36).

The legitimacy of development journalism as a yardstick for media practice in Africa has been questioned and discredited (Musa & Domatob, 2007). Shafer (1988) argued that "Development journalism [...] has suffered greatly from the perception that its strongest advocates are government officials who wish to deflect the press from engaging in the kind of

watchdog reporting that challenges the political or economic status quo, or that uncovers government incompetence, corruption and malfeasance (p. 40). For most African nations, development journalism means pointing out corruption among minor officials and not those in power. Campbell (2003) argued that development journalism was a scam by African governments “for strict state control of newspapers and of the broadcast media” (p. 32). Ward (2008) also argued that development journalism “meant downplaying or ignoring government mistakes in economic or social planning, it meant not damaging solidarity with ‘embarrassing’ reports [...] or violations of human rights; [...] it meant editors taking ‘advice’ from political leaders on what coverage was in the national interest” (p. 52). Development journalism was often used as justification to muzzle the news media and make them subservient to the whims and caprices of dictatorial regimes (White, 2010).

Critics of development journalism also refer to it as lapdog or sunshine journalism where journalists cooperate with politicians to make the political system work (Louw, 2010). Louw (2010) argues that “it is easy for partisan journalists to slide into becoming lapdog journalists when (successful) revolutionary movements they support become governments (p. 50). Protocol journalism is yet another concept used to describe what is expected of development journalists. The concept of protocol journalism was first muted at a United Nations Development (UNDP) workshop on the media in sustainable development, held in Abuja in April 2001 (Jibo & Ookoosi-Simbine, 2003). Jibo and Ookoosi-Simbine (2003) explain that protocol journalism occurs where “highly placed public officials are deliberately shielded from embarrassing questions by the media in return for some considerations, or because the officials and the journalists share a common ethnic background” (p. 187). Protocol journalism explains a situation where rather than been professional, some Nigerian journalists often capitulate to the pressures of business and political bigwigs by playing the protocol card which is expressed in their news reports (Jibo & Ookoosi-Simbine, 2003). Another argument against

development journalism is that by its very nature, it does not serve the interests of the masses but those of government. Nigerian journalists since independence in 1960 are therefore dogged by the dilemma of choice: to cooperate with governments and be tainted or be adversarial and get sanctioned.

Journalism in Nigeria like in many other African countries started as an appendage of Christian missionaries to propagate Christianity. Subsequently, nationalists who wanted political independence utilized the media as a means of self-actualization. They utilized the print media to create awareness among the members of the public aimed at achieving political independence. After independence and with regular regime changes, media practice in Nigeria developed a character of its own. The first Nigerian newspaper was established by Reverend Henry Townsend, an Anglican Priest in 1859. The newspaper published in vernacular was titled, *'Iwe Irohin Fun Awon Ara Egba Ati Yoruba'* which means a *'Newspaper in Yoruba for the Egba and Yoruba people'*. He was reported to have said that, 'my objective is to beget the habit of seeking information by reading [newspaper]' (Omu, 1985). Other newspapers established at that time included: *Anglo-African* in 1863; *Lagos Times/ Gold Colony Advertiser* in 1880; *Lagos Weekly Times* in 1890. These newspapers were established to propagate British colonial ideals and Christianity to the natives. Some of these newspapers were subsequently taken over by Nigerian nationalists, the regime in power and private individuals. Galadima & Enighe (2001) argued that "The press was owned and run by nationalists to confront the colonial government [and] was 'press of protest'" (p. 64). Nigerian nationalists like Nnamdi Azikwe, and Obafemi Awolowo therefore established newspapers to clamour for independence and fight against other forms of misrule by the colonialists. These newspapers included: *The West African Pilot* by Nnamdi Azikwe in 1937 and the *Tribune* by Obafemi Awolowo in 1944.

Yusha'u (2010) had singled out location as one of the characteristics that played a major role in the setting up of newspapers and explained that South-west Nigeria, and Lagos in



particular, was the gateway to Nigeria because this was where the missionaries who established the first newspaper entered the country. Although northern Nigeria has the advantage of Arabic and Islamic education, Yusha'u (2010) argued that the "region was left behind in terms of western education that later became the legacy of British colonialism and the leading means of communication in the Nigerian media to date" (p. 364). Because newspapers started in the South West with the arrival of Christian missionaries and later colonialists, this historical fact gave the South-western part of Nigeria an edge over the rest in terms of ownership of newspapers. The region also has a historical advantage in terms of the economy, professionals and other factors that are needed for the survival of newspapers (Yusha'u, 2010). Nigerian newspapers have been criticised for getting too attached to regions where their owners come from, which has further polarised the Nigerian media space along regional affiliations (Yusha'u 2010).

Nigerian newspapers fall into two major categories: the daily newspapers with additional titles devoted to weekends or special features such as the *Guardian*, *Punch*, *Sunday Punch*, *Sunday Guardian* or *Weekly Trust*. The second group comprises magazines devoted to investigative journalism like *Tell*, the *News*, *News watch*; and the second dedicated to soft-sell magazines which are essentially focused on entertainment, celebrities, gossip and are all published either weekly, bi-weekly or monthly. Some newspapers are also published in local languages. Babalola (2002) argued that: "these papers are targeted at the semi-literates and stark illiterates in the society" (pp. 403-410). These group of people usually depend on their children or friends that are literate at least, in the local languages, to read the news for them.

Newspapers were initially owned by private individual(s) while some were established, funded and financed by the government. The two prominent newspapers that were owned by the Federal government from 1975-1999 were the *Daily Times* and the *New Nigerian* newspapers. *Daily Times* of Nigeria was founded in 1925 by private individuals and the *New*

*Nigeria* newspaper was established in 1964 by the government of northern region. Despite the Federal military government's assurance that these acquisitions will not affect their independence (Igoma, 2011), these newspapers were returned to their private owners under the Federal government's privatisation policy in 1999. On 1<sup>st</sup> September 1975, the federal government re-acquired 60% of the *Daily Times* and *New Nigerian* newspapers. Under the civilian administration of former President Olusegun Obasanjo, the Bureau of Public Enterprises sold the *Daily Times* to Fidelis Anosike, a private investor of Folio Communications who gained control with 96.5% of shares in 2007. Since that time, the newspaper has been the subject of various lawsuits. However, it still runs from time to time but has never regained its momentum of the early years.

*New Nigeria* newspaper was also returned to its former owners who are the 19 northern states governors. Although as is the fate of most government-owned establishments in Nigeria, the *New Nigeria* newspaper is still battling with the problems of overhead cost and industrial strikes by workers due to non-payment of their salaries and other allowances. At present, the Nigerian government does not own any newspaper as it has relinquished its ownership of these newspapers after the privatization drive in 1999. There are, however, weekly, biweekly, monthly or quarterly publications and newsletters, which are mostly periodic publications to celebrate milestones in government. At the state level, the creation of states in the early 1970 heralded the emergence of new newspapers which were owned by state governments.

## **OWNERSHIP AND CONTROL**

A major issue that has shaped the contents and editorial policies of newspapers in Nigeria is ownership and control. Babalola (2002) argues that "the vibrancy, fearlessness and steadfastness of a newspaper are usually conditioned by the ownership status of the newspaper" (pp. 403-410). This can be contextualised along the dominant and pluralist perspectives of media theory as proposed by Humphreys (1996). McQuail (1995) identifies key features of

dominance in the news media which include a dominant elite, a centralized ownership and control which is concentrated in the hands of a few but very powerful interests, and a reduced critical capacity of the public with a dependent and passive audience. Some of these dominant owners also have vested interests in the economy, governance and society. Again, when talking about ownership and control in the Nigerian news media, Marx and Engel (1970)'s famous statement provides an understanding on the impact of power on the media and society:

The class which has the means of material production at its disposal, has control at the same time over the means of mental production, [...] the ideas of those who lack the means of mental production are subject to it [...]. The individuals composing the ruling class possess among other things consciousness, and therefore think. Insofar, therefore, as they rule as a class and determine the extent and compass of an epoch, it is self-evident that they do this in its whole range, hence among other things rule also as thinkers, as producers of ideas, and regulate the production and distribution of ideas of their age: thus, their ideas are the ruling ideas of the epoch (p. 64).

Marxists theorise that to legitimate and reproduce this system of inequality, the capitalist class uses its cultural power to dominate institutions like education and the mass media and transmit ruling class ideology (Marx & Engel, 1970). McQuail (2010) argues that this theory establishes “a direct link between economic ownership and the dissemination of messages that affirm the legitimacy and the value of a class society” (p. 96). Manning (2001) also argues that “radical and subordinate groups experienced more difficulty in promoting critical perspectives because they did not enjoy editorial access to newspapers with mass circulations, or popular publishing houses” (p. 36). Instances abound where pressure groups who hold contrary views to government were not given airtime on government owned media organizations like the *Nigerian Television Authority (NTA)* and *Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria (FRCN)* all owned by the federal government. Jibo and Okoosi-Simbine (2003) refer

to this concept as “proprietor interest’ where ‘the piper dictates the tune’ a well-known adage” (p. 182).

Another major approach to neo-Marxist theory for the purpose of focusing upon news media and the control of information is the propaganda model. An analysis of the propaganda model of the media is important in this study because the two major actors in the Boko Haram conflict, i.e. the sect and the security agencies, have used propaganda to try and win the war. Herman and Chomsky (2002) argued that powerful groups use the media through a mechanism of five filters to “mobilize an elite consensus, to give the appearance of democratic consent, and to create enough confusion, misunderstanding and apathy in the general population to allow elite programs to go forward” (p. 5). Herman and Chomsky (2002) identified these five filters as: the size, ownership and profit orientation of the mass media; the advertising license to do business; sourcing mass media news, with its heavy reliance on official sources; flak and the enforcers; and anti-communism as a control mechanism. Schlesinger (1989) however criticized this model as too simplistic and argued that “political audiences are receptive to media agendas circumstances but are rarely directly ‘controlled’ in the way suggested” (p. 308). Althusser’s (1971) theory on ‘ideological state apparatuses’ and ‘repressive state apparatuses’ can also be applied to the practice by the Nigerian government to control the production and distribution of news stories. This control is carried out through regular press briefings by agents of government. The setting up of an Information Command Centre (ICC) by the former Nigerian government of President Goodluck Jonathan was one of the attempts by the government to maintain its hegemonic control over the people.

Again, the concept of hegemony as proposed by Gramsci (1971) can be applied to media ownership in Nigeria which invariably influence news media narratives. Gramsci (1971) had coined the term ‘hegemony’ which explained that the society has two major super structural ‘levels’: ‘civil society’ and ‘the state’. Long and Wall (2009) also argued that the

concept of hegemony refers “to the way in which economic and cultural ‘leadership’ is demonstrated by a dominant group, how consent for it is sought and won, and where in society this takes place” (p. 286). Central to the concept of hegemony is therefore the subtle control of the masses by the powerful elite using the news media. For instance, The National Orientation Agency (NOA) is an organ set up by the Nigerian government to mobilise support for its programmes and policies. The hegemonic control of government was very evident during the build up to the 2015 general elections. The *Nigerian Television Authority (NTA)*, which is owned by the government, deployed everything at its disposal to curry support for former President Goodluck Jonathan’s campaign against his re-election bid.

From pro-independence struggle where the Nigerian press was classified as a Vanguard press, clandestine press, a press of protest, guerrilla press or underground press (Hachten, 1996; Campbell, 2003; and Obijiofor & Hanutsch, 2011), ownership and control of the Nigerian press have dictated how the press operated at that time. Jibo and Okoosi-Simbine (2003) argued that “the early Nigerian press was essentially a political press which took on the opposition to the government” (p. 182). Galadima and Enighe (2001) similarly argued that “the Nigerian press are always used by their owners- private party or government – for the propagation of the interests of such owners” (p. 64).

The influence ownership has over media production and content is more glaring when it comes to the coverage of political activities and events. Tobechukwu (2007) argued that “the principle of objectivity is always abandoned by the championing of the causes of their master’s political struggles [through] manipulations of the press to report false election results” (p. 74). Galadima and Enighe (2001) analysed Nigerian press coverage of political issues and argued that “there is recklessness and partisanship on the part of the press during elections and transition to the civil rule programmes instead of restraint and responsible reporting of events” (p. 61). Tobechukwu (2007) who examined the performance of the press after the annulment

of the June 12 presidential elections found that there was a complete relapse to the style of coverage which saw them tackle issues from tribal, ethnic, biased, opinionated and personal perspectives. This trend has continued to define the pattern of news coverage even today.

After independence, the Nigerian news media maintained an 'over-close' and uncritical relationship with the government. This type of ownership in the Nigerian media has had a negative effect on the profession as journalists do not have the freedom and liberty to be critical of government policies and programs. This is because those that work for such government media organizations are easily sanctioned or even sacked if the government feels they are too critical of their activities (Ronning, 2005; and Louw, 2010). The independent press also reflected the position of their owners often engaging in sensationalism. These have consequences on the form and type of journalism practised on the continent. Ronning (2005) argued that "the official media maintain an over-close and uncritical relationship with government, while the independent press often tends to be sensationalist and rumour mongering" (p. 178). News media ownership in Nigeria is also reflected in the country's media system of parallel regionalism as proposed by Yusha'u (2010). This imbalance is not limited to the media alone but is historically linked to the emergence of Nigeria as a nation state and is evident in almost every sector

From the literature reviewed, Western media's narratives of issues that affect Africa and other developing continents can be situated within Said's (1979) concept of Orientalism and 'otherness.' This has symbolically placed Africa and African people in a position of backwardness and stagnation while Europe and Europeans remain the super achievers and innovators (Pickering, 2011). Scholars (Galtung & Ruge, 1970; Wolfsfeld, 2004; and Franks, 2005) have offered various explanations on why Western media represents Africa in a biased and stereotypical way; which is rooted in eurocentrism and therefore a direct fallout of the colonial heritage. In their study of how the BBC and Aljazeera framed the Boko Haram

conflict, Ezeah and Emmanuel's (2016) study found that "world powerful media organisations continue to exert great influence on the polity of the African nations" (p. 39). This dominance can be described as modern colonialism (Turner, 2006). This is despite the fact, that negative images of Africa by the media of the developed countries, have continued to permeate media narratives about the continent (Hachten, 1999). The literature reviewed aligns with Musa and Yushu'a's (2013) findings in their study of conflict reporting and parachute journalism in Africa which highlighted the danger inherent in reports filed by foreign war correspondents who may not have adequate knowledge of the people and may therefore report the crisis out of context. This again agrees with the stereotypes found in most foreign media's representations of Africa. This is because stereotypes are the quickest ways of getting the stories about Africa written by the Western media (Ndlela, 2005).

Unfortunately, stories about Africa are still told through the eyes of foreign journalists (Ezeah & Emmanuel, 2006). It also follows that most local news media narratives about issues in the developing world like Nigeria are seen through the eyes of foreign news organizations. Intermedia agenda setting where the agendas of news organizations are often influenced by the news agendas of elite news media (Roberts & McCombs, 1994; and Vargo & Guo, 2017) offers explanation to this dependence. Foreign news media therefore set the news agenda for Nigerian news media covering the Boko Haram conflict. This again reinforces arguments by postcolonial theorists that the western world still exert domination over developing countries like Nigeria through their structures and institutions including the news media.

Even though the stereotypical representations of Africa in the news media are evident and remain pervasive (Galtung & Ruge, 1970; Said, 1978; Wolfsfeld, 2004; Franks, 2005; and Turner, 2006), studies have also shown that media reports are shaped and influenced by dominant ideologies (Long & Wall, 2009; Dominick, 2009; and Ramone, 2011). This therefore means that Western media either subtly or inadvertently impose their view of the world through

media from developing nations. This is in form of inter-media agenda setting role of powerful elite media. Other scholars link this overreliance to the colonial legacy (Nyamnjoh, 1999; Turner, 2006; Obijiofor & Hanutsch, 2011; and Mabweazara, 2015). Obijiofor and Hanutsch (2011) argued that there are “historical links between European models and the systems of mass media that emerged in former colonies after independence” (p. 22). The dependence on elite foreign news media is further fuelled by the challenging and complex conditions within which Nigerian journalists operate. These have limited their ability to independently cover stories especially from conflict zones. It therefore follows that despite the stereotypical and often negative portrayal of the continent by western media, hegemony and domination persists in form of modern colonialism and neocolonialism.

The literature reviewed also built on Spivak’s (1988) study in subalternity and Said’s (1978) readings on Orientalism which offer an explanation into news media representations of women in conflicts. Other scholars (Butler, 1999; Beauvoir, 2005; and Geertsema, 2009), also built on Said’s (1978) concept of the ‘other’ to explain news media underrepresentation/misrepresentation of women. Part of the reasons why women in African societies are forced to remain silent for example might be linked to the notion held by the western media that they cannot speak on public issues. Corroborating Spivak (1988), Valdivia (1995) argued that postcolonial women are forced to remain silent partly because of “the Western press’s inability to envision such women as speaking subjects on public issues” (p. 15). The absence of the woman in colonial discourse is an indication of the difficulty in recovering her voice and an indication that there is no agency for her to speak (Spivak, 1988) which extends to present day news media representations of women.

The Gramscian notion of hegemony has also played an important role in shaping theories of feminism (hooks, 1984; Mohanty, 2003; and Sandoval, 2003) and can be applied to Nigeria where men hold hegemonic power over women and important decisions in the family



are decided by them. This hegemonic hold on women extends to their portrayal in the media which is widespread (Global Media Monitoring Project 's WACC 2005). Radical feminism similarly offers an explanation on why violence against women occur which is as a result of a male –dominated social structure and socialization practices that teaches gender- specific roles. The literature reviewed similarly theorize that despite the influence women in precolonial era (Queen Amina of Zazzau, 1533-1610); colonialism times (Aba women of 1929; Funmilayo Ransome Kuti, Margret Ekpo and Gambo Sawaba); welded, they still remain within the confines of patriarchy (Anyanwu, 2001; Okome, 2002; Ajayi, 2007; and Ozoemena, 2017). The literature reviewed suggests that the construction of the Nigerian woman is situated within colonial narratives (Okome, 2002) which have reinforced patriarchy and other gender stereotypes against her. Some of these practices and stereotypes are products of British colonial heritage.

The literature reviewed also highlighted the intersectionality of patriarchal discrimination with social structures and identities like ethnicity, race, sex, gender, sexual orientation, education, religion and other forms of oppression against women. Women are not a homogenous group (Spelman, 1990) but heterogeneous. They are separated by age, caste, class, race, religion, disability, indigeneity, minority status including sexual orientation and other multiple factors. Because of this homogeneity and heterogeneity, Banda (2008) places a demand on the need to take a holistic look at the way societies are organized and the differential impact of discrimination on the various groups within it. The intersectionality of ethnicity, gender, religion and sex with other forms of discrimination and patriarchal oppression have contributed to the misrepresentation/underrepresentation of women. The discriminated status of women in North east Nigeria, where the Boko Haram conflict is raging is further compounded when Islamic religion, ethnicity and patriarchy intersect to further relegate the woman to a 'second class' status.

The literature also examined conflicts in Nigeria in relation to its history and geopolitics. Right from pre-colonial days of migration and Jihad by native Africans and Jihadists (from Sudan), to the National Food Shortage Strike, violence in Plateau State between the Igbos and Hausa migrants in 1945, religious and ethno-political crises have remained pervasive in the history of Nigeria to date (Osaghae & Suberu, 2005). As one of the major conflicts that is threatening the very foundation of Nigeria, the Boko Haram conflict is a fallout of these crises and conflicts. Raging for the past 17 years, the conflict is characterised by attacks on soft targets like women, the sick, children and the aged (Small & Singer, 1982; O' Neill, 2005; Metz, 2007; Bennet, 2008; Ogundiya & Amzat, 2008; and Abubakar, 2016). With an estimated casualty figure of over 17000 people, 2 million Internally Displaced Persons (IDP); 3 million children in need of emergency education, the conflict has affected 14.8 million people (Amnesty International, 2016/17; International Organization for Migration, 2017; and United Nations Children Fund, 2018). Amnesty International reports (2015 & 2017) estimated that the sect abducted over 2000 women and girls in 2014 alone while members of the Nigerian military and the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF) have been accused of sexually exploiting women in the IDP camps in exchange for money or food. From the statistics provided, the Boko Haram conflict has again highlighted the extent of the woman's disadvantaged position in North East sub-region.

The literature reviewed in this chapter also examined other concepts like regional parallelism; ubuntuism as an ethical framework for Nigerian news media; development journalism; and media representations. These key concepts have laid the argumentative foundation upon which this research is built. This study argues that the representations of women in the news media reflect societal norms, tradition, religion, culture, and British colonial legacy. How then have the Nigerian newspapers represented women in the conflict? Are they in the words of Thussu and Freedman (2003) "arbitrary observers playing the role of an objective medium; mouthpiece of the Nigerian government or the opposition; or as the

battlefield upon which the war against terrorism is fought” (p. 4)? This study is an attempt to provide answers to these questions and argues that women representations in the media and journalistic discourse reflect patriarchal practices from colonial times to present day post colonialism. With more women getting educated and acquiring skills hitherto the exclusive preserve of men, they have expanded their roles and are making significant contributions to development in all aspects of social, economic, political and cultural life. Despite these achievements, women are still treated as unequal partners to men and remain a minority without a voice within Nigeria’s political and media space. Borno state, North east Nigeria where the Boko Haram sect has systematically targeted women with intensity in the last seven years is a product of a patriarchal and conservative society steeped in culture, tradition and religion. This work examines selected Nigerian national newspapers to find out how reports about the Boko Haram conflict and its effect on women are framed by journalists.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **THE ORIGIN AND RISE OF BOKO HARAM SECT**

#### **ORIGIN**

Virtually everything about Boko Haram from its origin, ideology, means of funding, membership drive, and name is contested and shrouded in controversy. Walker (2016) argued that “the contested political and social reality of Nigeria has created 'a condition of a continual crisis of epistemology', and many conspiracy theories should be attempts to locate Boko Haram in Nigeria's patrimonial networks and power structures” (p. 211). The Boko Haram sect which started operations in 2002 is believed to have historical links to other Islamic fundamentalist groups. Studies on the group remain inconclusive about its origin. Boko Haram’s emergence was linked to the radical teachings of Islamic scholars like Sheikh Gumi and Abubakar Lawan (Aguwa, 1997; and Ori, 2013).

The Boko Haram conflict is therefore a fallout of radical Islam as championed by Islamic scholars like Muhammadu Marwa also known as Maitatsine (meaning ‘the one who curses’ in Hausa) from where the group derived its name (Hiskett, 1987). Okoro and Chukwuma (2014) argued that the Maitatsine sect evolved from “various efforts by extremists’ elements [...] to radicalize segments of northern Nigeria” (p. 41). In a deeply divided Northern Nigeria where wealth is unevenly distributed, radical Islamic scholars like Muhammad Marwa became the rallying figure for many Muslims who were not satisfied with the status quo. Hiskett (1987) revealed that the Maitatsine sect attracted the urban poor with its message that “denounced the affluent elites [...] as infidels, opposed Western influence, and refused to recognize secular authorities” (p. 255). This sect took an aggressive stance against Western influence, refusing to accept the legitimacy of secular authorities. As his following swelled with unemployed urban youth, skirmishes and clashes continued unabated with a major confrontation with the police in December 1980 when an open-air rally in Kano, North central

Nigeria sparked massive rioting, leaving many hundred dead. The Maitatsine uprising led to 11 days of violent clashes with the Nigerian Police Force in Kano in December 1980. About 4,177 people were killed in the violence, excluding members of the police force who lost their lives (Hiskett, 1987).

Other radical Islamic groups that might have had influence on the emergence of Boko Haram include the Jama'at Izalat al-Bida wa Iqamat al-Sunnah (Society for the Eradication of Evil Innovations and the Reestablishment of the Sunna), better known as the Izala Movement which has contributed to a general religious revival and a much greater public and political role for Islam (International Crisis Group, 2013; Walker, 2016; Ogbonna & Jimenez, 2017). Several other reform movements, including the Muslim Students Society of Nigeria (MSS), widely regarded as a platform for young radical preachers, and the Islamic Movement of Nigeria, its radical offshoot better known as the Muslim Brotherhood, or Zakzaky, after its leader, joined it. A similar group like the Muslim brotherhood appeared in the North East in 2002 and later metamorphosed as the Boko Haram Sect. The International Crisis Group (2013) links the emergence of Boko Haram to an upsurge of "Islamic reform groups in the north that share broadly common stated goals of promoting a 'purist' version of Islam based on Sharia; eradicating heretical innovations; and, for many, establishing an Islamic state in the north" (p. 8).

The introduction of sharia law in the Muslim North might have played a major role in the emergence of the sect. Ogbonna and Jimenez (2017) argued that "a crucial issue that facilitated the emergence of the group, is the introduction of Islamic Sharia law in [...] Muslim majority states of Zamfara, Kano, Sokoto, Katsina, Bauchi, Borno, Jigawa, Kebbi and Yobe introduced Sharia law across their territory, while Kaduna, Niger and Gombe State introduced Sharia in the parts of their land where there was a large Muslim population" (p. 9). The clamour for a true sharia state might have given the sect the impetus it needed to push for its own brand

of Islam. Three years after the introduction of sharia law in some of these Northern states, Boko Haram struck. Researchers (Abubakar, 2012; Herskovits, 2012; and Smith, 2015) have also linked the emergence of Boko Haram to Nigeria's endemic corruption; youth unemployment; chronic poverty; poor governance; incompetent security services; the rise of jihadi ideology in response to the Western countries' war on terror; British colonial legacy and a lack of proper education. Like the Maitatsine sect before it, Boko Haram emerged as a social political movement against corruption, injustice and abandonment and is believed to have started its operations in Maiduguri, Borno State capital with members spreading into neighbouring Bauchi, Yobe, Kano, Gombe, Taraba, Kaduna, Kebbi, Adamawa and Sokoto. Boko Haram seeks the establishment of an Islamic State in Nigeria and opposes the westernization of Nigerian society as well as symbols of wealth amongst the political elite.

Founded by Muhammad Yusuf in north-eastern Nigeria around 2002 (Herskovits, 2012), Boko Haram began as a peaceful movement before liaisons with politicians and encounters with security operatives turned it into a violent organisation blamed for the most dreadful attacks in the country (Abubakar, 2012; and Amnesty International, 2015). Boko Haram became a fully-fledged insurgent group after the killing of its founder by the police in July 2009 following an uprising in which more than 800 people, mostly its members, were killed (Smith, 2015). The remaining members went underground and resurfaced a year later under a new leader, Abubakar Shekau, with deadly attacks including bombing of schools, churches, mosques and markets as well as kidnapping for ransoms – and for sexual enslavement, bank robberies, cattle rustling, and raiding towns and villages in Nigeria and in neighbouring Niger, Chad, and Cameroon (Abubakar, 2017). Abubakar (2017) argued that “Boko Haram militants have committed far worse atrocities, such as beheadings and mass executions. They seized swathes of territory in north-eastern Nigeria where they declared their caliphate. At one time (between mid-2014 and early 2015), they were controlling a territory

the size of Belgium, upon which they imposed their own version of Islamic law, beheading suspected spies and stoning to death those they convicted of adultery” (p. 147). The 2015 report of the Global Terrorism Index described Boko Haram as the world’s deadliest terror group.

The main goal of Boko Haram sect like its emergence is fraught with speculations and conjectures among scholars and analysts. Nevertheless, Boko Haram means ‘anti-Western values’ and its goal is to repel Western values and ideology within Nigerian society especially in the northern part. Contextualising reasons for the resentment of western education and ideology by the sect, Yusha’u (2012) argued:

[It] can be traced [...] to [...] Christian missionaries and British colonial administrators in Nigeria; [where] Muslims [...] from Northern Nigeria who were under the [...] Sokoto Caliphate and the Borno empire- saw the western aspect of education or *ilmin boko* in Hausa language as a way of diluting their cultural and religious values with foreign ones. Another factor [...] is the colonial policy of the British in denying Muslims full access to western education [which] created an imbalance between Muslims and Christians [...] and [persists to date] including the control of the news media (pp. 93 & 94).

Linked to this is the criteria for enrolment into schools established by Christian missionaries which was approved by the British colonial administration (Yusha’u, 2012). The criteria for enrolment was conversion to Christianity making it difficult for Muslims to enrol. Another goal of the sect is to Islamize Nigeria and fight a Jihad against non-Muslims. Ori (2013) argued:

Redeeming non-Muslims from perdition, liberation of Muslims from persecution, protecting Islam from criticism, and revenging perceived acts of injustices against Muslims are the values that have emerged from Boko Haram’s discursive activities. Boko Haram’s values are embedded in a fundamental Islamic vision which they have

communicated as the perfect [...] and the desired order for Nigerian Muslims. Boko Haram portrays its critics [...] as constituting a threat to Islam. Through strategic rhetorical choices Boko Haram depicts the Nigerian government, Western and Christian entities as standing in the [...] will of Allah and calls on its audience to put these entities out of harm's way by conversion or [death] for constituting an opposition to Allah (p. 54).

Scholars (Ajayi, 2012; and Yusha'u, 2012) have however disputed this goal as hundreds of Muslims like members of other religious groups have been murdered by the sect. Instead, the sect seems to advocate for a strict implementation of an orthodox doctrine across the region, which explains their apathy for moderate Muslims. The sect appears to be influenced by the perception that politics in Northern Nigeria has been hijacked by corrupt, false Muslims and that is why it is waging war against them to create a 'pure' Islamic state (Walker, 2012). Boko Haram's mission to restore a conservative version of Islam can be traced to the 19th Century when Usman Dan Fodio embarked on a Jihad to implement a stricter version of Islam in Northern Nigeria (Ori, 2013; and Yusha'u, 2012). These scholars credit the Sokoto caliphate established by Usman Dan Fodio which ruled parts of the regions of what is now Northern Nigeria, Niger and Cameroon as the precursor to Islamic radicalism and revivalism. This is because since it succumbed to British rule in 1903, Muslims in the region have resisted western education.

Another issue is the relationship between religious attachment and identity. Drawing a parallel between religious attachment and the Boko Haram sect, Counted (2017) argued that the group sees itself as 'defenders' of the Islamic identity with an "underlying bond with their faith and what it represents [while] anyone who stands contrary to this sense of identity or pose a threat to [this] attachment identity will be targeted as the enemy" (p. ). Boko Haram was a relatively small fundamentalist group until the killing of its leader, Yusuf, in 2009 (Umar 2011)



when it began a bloodletting campaign against the Nigerian state to take revenge for the death of their leader and reinforce their attachment allegiance to him (Counted, 2017) thereby defending their attachment identity formed through their late leader, Mohammed Yusuf. Although Boko Haram's emergence as a deadly Islamic extremist group remains shrouded in controversies and conjectures, early Islamic radicalisation and the quest for the practice of Islam in its true form have influenced its advent and rise to the present day. The high poverty rate, political grievances against the government, unemployment and the sharp economic gaps between the rich and poor have also contributed to Boko Haram's monumental rise (Yushu'a, 2012; Abubakar, 2012; Herskovits, 2012; and Smith, 2015).

## **NAME**

Boko Haram's original name was 'Yusufiyya' or 'Nigerian Taliban'. The name 'Boko Haram' means 'Western education is prohibited, forbidden or sacrilegious'. The sect detests this name and prefers to be called '*Jama'atu Ahlus Sunna lid Da'awatu wal-Jihad*' in Arabic ('Movement for the Propagation and Enthronement of Righteous Deeds' or 'the Congregation of the People of Tradition for Proselytes and Jihad'). The term Boko Haram is derived from a combination of the Hausa word 'Boko', meaning 'book', and the Hausa word 'haram', which means 'sinful'. Boko Haram therefore means 'Western education is sinful'. Isa (2010) explained that this literal meaning implies a rejection of the "imposition of Western education and its system of colonial social organisation, which replaced and degraded the earlier Islamic order of the jihadist state" (p. 332). Isa (2010) further explained that the sect reasons that the system represented by those who have undergone western forms of education is considered secular and corrupt and therefore has no connection to its Islamic identity (Counted, 2017). Boko Haram leader, Mohammed Yusuf, once said, 'Our land was an Islamic state before the colonial masters turned it to a kafir (infidel) land. The current system is contrary to true Islamic beliefs' (Salkida, 2009). Linking this to the religious attachment earlier discussed in the literature, Counted (2017)

explained that the erstwhile Late Boko Haram leader believed that the system is mixed with issues that are contrary to Islamic beliefs and therefore constitutes a problem to their attachment bond and identity.

‘Boko’ in native Hausa also means ‘shame’ and ‘fraud’, which came to represent western education and learning (Neuman, 2015). Yusha’u (2012) argued that, “among Hausa people, to be associated with ‘Boko’, means a person exhibits odd behaviour compared to other members of the community [which] could be in terms of dressing, eating habits, socialising with people” (p. 92). Musa and Yusha’u (2013) further explained:

Before adapting the word Boko to mean western education, its original meaning is ‘fake’, and because of the predominance of the Islamic system of education, when the British colonialists introduced a new system of education using the Latin script, people referred to the new system as fake education, and that was part of the reasons why western education is called ‘Boko’ (p. 255).

Drawing from Ibrahim’s (2009) suggestions that the word boko originates from the English word ‘book’ and is an adulterated version of the word ‘book’ in Hausa, Yusha’u (2012) argued that “Boko does not mean ‘Western education’ only, rather it refers to any form of knowledge that is taught in a modern setting using classrooms and an organized school structure; Islamic education, therefore, is also part of Boko” (p. 93). Yusha’u (2012) identified some Nigerian Islamic scholars like Sheikh Abubakar Mahmoud Gumi or Sheikh Adam Ilori who attended the school for Arabic studies in Kano and other universities around the world, who are all ‘yan Boko’ (products of education) and argued that “this could explain why it is difficult for the Muslim community to accept the views of a group that holds that Boko is bad or forbidden [and concluded] that the Boko Haram group have simply taken a one-sided view of knowledge, either due to ignorance or some selfish motive, or both” (p. 93).

Onuoha (2012) explained that “members rejected this designation [and] prefer ‘Western civilization is forbidden’; [the] difference is that ‘while the first gives the impression that we are opposed to formal education coming from the West [...] which is not true, the second affirms our belief in the supremacy of Islamic culture (not education), for culture is broader, it includes education but not determined by Western education” (pp. 1–6). In his explanation Isa (2010) argued that the term implies a rejection and “resistance to imposition of Western education and its system of colonial social organization, which replaced and degraded the earlier Islamic order of the jihadist state” (p. 315).

## **IDEOLOGY**

As a movement of ‘restoration’, Boko Haram practices Wahhabism, Salafism and Sunni Islamic fundamentalism, as the core of its ideology maintaining strict Sharia Law (Enke & Adams, 2015). Boko Haram’s core beliefs are strict adherence to the Q’uran and the Hadith (sayings of the Prophet Muhammed, PBUH), and their interpretation as sanctioned by Ibn Taymiyyah (the preferred scholar of Mohammed Yusuf, the sect’s leader). Qaqa (2009) explained that “our objective is to place Nigeria in a difficult position and even destabilize it and replace it with Sharia” (p. 5). In their study of ideology in the tweets by Boko Haram, Chilwa and Ajiboye (2014) argued that “Jihadism is essentially ideological and the Boko Haram group, for example, promotes religious and cultural practices that are reflective of Islamic ideologies [...] their activities seek to institutionalize these practices to establish their group and institutional identity” (p. 320). Boko Haram's ideology is embedded in a deep tradition of Islamism and is but one of several variants of radical Islamism to have emerged in Northern Nigeria (Chilwa & Ajiboye, 2014).

In line with its own brand of Islamic ideology, the sect is strongly opposed to what it sees as Western-based incursion that threatens traditional values, beliefs and customs among Muslim communities in Northern Nigeria. The group's first leader Mohammed Yusuf told the

BBC in 2009: “Western-style education is mixed with issues that run contrary to our beliefs in Islam” (Rogers, 2012). Also, Salkida (2009) explained that the leader claimed: “[o]ur land was an Islamic state before the colonial masters turned it to a *kafir* land. The current system is contrary to true Islamic beliefs” (p. 2). A statement released by Boko Haram in 2011 and carried by *Daily Trust* newspaper of 25/04/2011 encapsulated its ideals and mission:

We want to reiterate that we are warriors who are carrying out Jihad (religious war) in Nigeria and our struggle is based on the traditions of the holy prophet. We will never accept any system of government apart from the one stipulated by Islam because that is the only way that the Muslims can be liberated. We do not believe in any system of government, be it traditional or orthodox except the Islamic system that is why we will keep on fighting against democracy, capitalism, socialism and whatever. We will not allow the Nigerian constitution to replace the laws that have been enshrined in the Holy Qur'an. We will not allow adulterated conventional education (Boko) to replace Islamic teachings. We will not respect the Nigerian government because it is illegal. We will continue to fight its military and the police because they are not protecting Islam. We do not believe in the Nigerian judicial system and we will fight anyone who assists the government in perpetrating illegalities.

The Boko Haram conflict is therefore fuelled by the search for a pure and true form of Islam with adherents deploying various strategies often violent to win members or eliminate any form of opposition to their beliefs.

## **SOCIO-ECONOMIC FACTORS**

To understand the rise and spread of the Boko Haram sect, it is important to understand the social and economic environment and society within which it originated. While the overriding goal of Boko Haram is to wrest control from the Nigerian state and to impose the Sharia legal

code across the entire country, the combination of political corruption, chronic poverty and youth unemployment in Northern Nigeria have fuelled its activities. The circumstances surrounding the death of Boko Haram' founder and leader served to foment pre-existing animosities toward the government. This is further compounded by the fact that their communities, as Isa (2010) argued, have been "wrecked by poverty, deteriorating social services and infrastructure, educational backwardness, rising numbers of unemployed graduates, massive numbers of unemployed youths, dwindling fortunes in agriculture [...] and the weak and dwindling productive base of the northern economy" (p. 320). Human Rights Watch (2012) argued that "A complex mixture of economic, social, and political factors had provided a fertile environment for Boko Haram. These include endemic corruption, poverty (which is more severe in large parts of the north than in other parts of the country), and impunity for violence, including horrific inter-communal killings and human rights abuses by security forces" (p. 10).

In the North East, poverty, illiteracy, the rampant, entrenched corruption and other societal and government's ineptitude with its resultant frustration and alienation have driven many especially the unemployed youths to join 'self-help' ethnic, religious, community or civic groups, some of which are hostile to the state (National Bureau of Statistics, 2006; National Population Commission, 2008; UNDP, 2009; Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey, 2009; Human Rights Watch, 2012). Thurston (2011) argued that "Boko Haram has an entrenched sense of victimhood and now sees the state as both the main persecutor of 'true' Muslims and the major obstacle to 'true' Islamic reform" (p. 126). This is further fed by the abject poverty, deteriorating social services and the increasing number of unemployed youths. The International Crisis Group (2013) argued that, "bad governance, sustained economic hardship, rising inequality and social frustration are fostering the growth of radical extremist groups such as Boko Haram, which has tapped into Muslim revivalism in the north" (p. 1). Ette (2013) also

argued that “although the activities of the Islamic sect [...] appear to be informed by religious values, the underlying tension could be linked to a sense of marginalisation and alienation that seems to pervade some parts of the country” (p. 118). The emergence of violent extremists like the Boko Haram can be viewed partly as a response to insecurities about their spiritual and socio-economic future. The rise of the sect can therefore be attributed to the chronic poverty and deprivation in Northern Nigeria.

The UNDP (2009) identifies some selected human development benchmarks to gain further insights into the human development profile across Nigeria. The selected benchmarks include adult literacy rate, gross enrolment rate, percentage of population not using improved water sources, percentage of underweight children under age five, and life expectancy. Statistics show that poverty is more endemic in the northern part of the country, except the Federal Capital Territory (FCT). This statistic also shows that North east Nigeria where the Boko Haram sect is wreaking havoc scored the lowest in human development index. UNDP (2009) analysis also examines the population not using improved sources of water in Nigeria. Results show that the South zone is worst hit of the three Southern zones while in the northern zones, North East zone has the worst case of about 74 per cent of its population not using improved water sources. In the gender empowerment profile, Borno State came second as one of the worst performing states next with a score of 0.033. Going by the human poverty index, poverty is most pronounced in Yobe, Borno, Kebbi, Katsina, and Bauchi in order of intensity (UNDP, 2009). Again, the effect of poverty on health and education in Northern Nigeria is particularly striking. A report by the National Population Commission (2008) finds that literacy rates are much lower among states in the North, and that 72 per cent of children around the ages of 6–16 never attended schools in Borno State. Similarly, the National Bureau of Statistics’ report on Nigeria Poverty Profile (2012) reveals that “70 % of Nigerians in northeast

Nigeria—Boko Haram’s traditional stronghold—live on less than a dollar a day, compared to 50 and 59 percent in southwest and southeast Nigeria, respectively” (p. 15).

These statistics demonstrate that the level of socio-economic development of Northern Nigeria particularly the North east at the time of Boko Haram’s rise offer the reason for its rise and the success of its mobilization drive. Apart of the desire for a purer form of Islam as dictated by the Holy Quran, the conflict is driven by poverty, lack of adequate and dwindling social services and infrastructure; educational backwardness, lack of jobs for a growing number of youths; declining fortunes in agriculture, and the weak productive base of the northern economy. Sope Elegbe, research director at the Nigerian Economic Summit Group (NESG cited in Oxford Research Group, 2011) argues that “the increasing poverty in Nigeria is accompanied by increasing unemployment [which is] higher in the North than in the South [coupled] with radical Islam which promises a better life for martyrs, and you can understand the growing violence in the north (p. 4). These problems are further compounded by a corrupt political class and the big disparity and gap between the rich and the poor.

## **OPERATIONS AND MEMBERSHIP**

The Boko Haram sect metamorphosed from a relatively peaceful but vocal Islamic fundamentalist group to a deadly and violent group, virulent, heartless and brutal in its attacks - killing, maiming, raping and kidnapping thousands and leaving in its wake destruction to lives and properties. One of the major strategies that the sect uses is its effective planning and well-organized leadership structure. Philpott (2007 cited in Samu, 2012) argues that “Boko Haram has a hierarchical organization that enables them to effectively plan, command and coordinate operations, gather intelligence, maintain security, train and ensure logistics and financial support without being noticed” (p. 40). This was used to its advantage where attacks were well coordinated and planned with precision. At the time of his death, Yusuf was the commander in chief (Amir Ul-Aam) of the entire group. The International Crisis Group (2013) argues that

“Boko Haram’s leader, Mohammed Yusuf began as a preacher and leader in the youth wing of Ahl-Sunnah, a Salafi group at the Muhammadu Indimi Mosque in Maiduguri, the capital of Borno state, North East Nigeria under the mentorship of late Sheikh Jafaar Mahmud Adam” (p. 7). Yusuf had two deputies (Na'ib Amir ul-Aam I & II), and each state and local government where they exist had its own amir (commander/leader).

With the intensive mobilization of members after his first release from police custody in November 2008 in Maiduguri, membership of the sect grew rapidly. The Almajiri system in the North nurtured the sect and made this mobilization exercise easy. Almajiri refers to children sent by their parents to Islamic boarding schools in Northern Nigeria, where they receive informal Islamic education. Boko Haram’s membership cuts across the broad spectrum of northern Nigerian society, but a great number of members come from its poorest groups (Adesoji, 2010). Boko Haram's membership comprises university lecturers, bankers, and political elites, unemployed graduates, almajiris and migrants from neighbouring countries. Members are also drawn primarily from the Kanuri tribe—who are concentrated in the North-Eastern state of Borno, and the Hausa-Fulani spread more generally throughout most of the Northern states. Other members are also drawn from the Shuwa Arab, the Babur/Bura, Marghi, and Gwoza all from areas in the North and North east Nigeria. Boko Haram members distinguish themselves by growing long beards and wearing red or black headscarves (Carpenter, 2011). Members disowned their parents, burned or tore their educational certificates and employment letters when they joined the sect. Their main enemies were the ruling class and Nigeria’s educated elite. The common denominator among members was to overthrow the secular government and to propagate Islamic law.

Initially Boko Haram secluded itself from mainstream Muslim communities in North East Nigeria believing the government to be corrupt and anti-Islamic. In its early stages, the group mainly attacked Christians using clubs, machetes, and small arms as part of a strategy to



provoke sectarian violence. But by late 2010, Boko Haram had begun making and using crude but effective improvised explosive devices (Forest, 2012). Boko Haram became a fully-fledged insurgency following confrontations between the sect and the state's security agencies in Borno State charged with the responsibility of enforcing a newly introduced law of wearing crash-helmets by motorcyclists in the state. Members of Boko Haram refused to obey this law. This precipitated a violent confrontation between the state's enforcement agency and the Boko Haram sect, claiming the lives of 17 members of Boko Haram in the crossfire (Adesoji, 2010; Forest, 2012; Ori, 2013; and Abubakar, 2016). Following this, the group mobilized its members for an attack which led to the deaths of several policemen and civilians.

The riot was temporarily quelled after Nigerian forces captured and killed the Boko Haram leader Mohammed Yusuf and the arrested several of its members. Following this, the group retreated but resurfaced with more advanced tactics and coordinated attacks against government establishments especially police stations, police officers, and military barracks, when the Nigerian government launched an investigation into the sect's activities which led to the deaths of hundreds of people (Forest, 2012; Yusha'u, 2012; Abubakar, 2012; Ori, 2013; and Smith, 2015). The Boko Haram sect vowed to retaliate the killings of its leader and members by continuing with hostilities against the Nigerian state until those responsible for the killing of its leader were prosecuted, its detained members released, its destroyed mosque rebuilt, and compensation paid to the families of its members killed by Nigerian troops Ori, 2013; Smith, 2015; and Abubakar, 2017).

Under the leadership of Abubakar Shekau, a former deputy to Yusuf, the sect became more daring and its reign of terror reached its zenith. Nielsen (2017) argues that "ruthlessness and adaptability have simultaneously been Boko Haram's biggest strength and weakness. Their willingness to exploit taboos and break social norms, use indiscriminate violence and adopt a wide range of tactics to outmanoeuvre security forces, checkpoints, and local vigilantes

manning markets [...] has been a key to successes in their operations [which] has also been a main factor alienating them from the local population” (p. 45).

## **PROPAGANDA**

Boko Haram has similarly used propaganda not only to instil fear but to also mobilise support from radical Islamic groups internationally and at home; to recruit new members; and to win the war of words against the government. Bockstette (2008) argues that Boko Haram’s “communication goals are aimed at legitimizing, propagating and intimidating” (p. 5). Studies (Cottle, 2006; Bockstette, 2008; Ori, 2011; and Abubakar 2016) suggest that the mass media, especially social media, have become the key enablers and the main strategic communication assets for terrorists and that the internet is used by international terrorist organizations as a tool for radicalization, and recruitment. Abubakar (2016) also argues that “so significant is propaganda to the group that it is an integral part of its original name ‘Da’awatu’ – Arabic for propagation – is a key component of Jama’atu Ahlus Sunna lid Da’awatu wal-Jihad; and as such enormous resources were devoted to it” (p. 148). The various media strategies adopted by the sect ranged from the use of audio and video cassettes or ‘small media’; mainstream media relations; guerrilla media strategies; direct dropping strategies; and online drive (Abubakar, 2016).

Again, in its desire to control media narratives the Nigerian military has used the ‘war on terror’ to threaten, harass, arrest, detain, and seize the equipment of news reporters deemed to have written unfavourable stories due to ‘security’ reasons. Even with its claim of being a democracy and the press enjoying press freedom as enshrined in Section 39(1) of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria which states that “Everybody shall be entitled to freedom of expression, including freedom to hold opinion and to receive and impart ideas and information”, journalists still experience censorships, intimidation, harassments and detention by security agencies acting on orders from ‘above’. A case in point was the detention

of Al-Jazeera's journalists in Maiduguri in 2015 and the confiscation and destruction of thousands of copies of some newspapers' editions across the country. Initially, the army allowed its unit in Maiduguri to communicate directly with the media from July 2009 to June 2012 which was later changed to an over-centralised system with the Defence Headquarters in Abuja, the Nigerian Federal Capital territory given the sole mandate of information dissemination (Abubakar, 2016). Abubakar (2016) argues:

It was the militants – not the media or the Nigerian authorities – who seemed to be dictating the news agenda of many media outlets. They were achieving this not necessarily by skilful manipulation of the media, but mainly by the depths of their depravity. The global media's passion for covering dramatic events partly facilitated this; [...] its media relations skills – rudimentary though some of them were – may have played a part here, but, most of this was as much the result of the group's unfettered barbarity as it was the consequence of the changes taking place in our complex media environment (p. 10).

Although the strict information control exerted by both the army and the Boko Haram sect affected how media narratives about the conflict were reported, these did not stop the two sides to the conflict from deploying all propaganda strategies at their disposal to win media narratives about the conflict. Abubakar (2016) argues that "Western media's current Islamist fixation in their coverage of events is largely responsible for the massive attention they have been giving to jihadi groups. And because the jihadists too seek such attention, for their own purposes, a convergence of a sort has emerged" (p. 3). Weimann (1983) also argues that "publicity is the lifeblood of terrorism and the media, [...] are playing a central role in the calculus of terrorism and through their choices can serve to minimize or magnify terrorist violence" (p. 197). Agreeing with this analysis, Nacos (2016) writes that "the mainstream news media remain indispensable for terrorist propaganda because conventional news outlets tend to

alert the public to the most sensational features and developments in terrorists' mass self-communication via internet sites and social media networking" (p. 36). Cottle (2006) is however of a contrary view and argues that "Research findings [...] suggest that though the generality of media coverage grants terrorist acts and consequences attention and may thereby be implicated in insurgency efforts to disseminate fear, media coverage typically fails to provide explanation, reason or political motive [and that] evidence is in short supply, [...] the media are anything but disposed to grant 'terrorists' an opportunity to advance their political aims or claims for political legitimacy" (p. 145). Despite the debates on the power of the media to effect or fuel terrorism or not, the Boko Haram sect was able to adopt every propaganda strategy to radicalize, mobilize and recruit members through crude and sophisticated use of the media. Drawing on Galtung and Ruge (1965)'s study on the structure of foreign news media, Abubakar (2017) argues that "Boko Haram activities fit well into most of the news values they identified [...] and is therefore deemed newsworthy" (p. 162). The extent to which this campaign succeeded is subject to further examination and analysis. This research argues that both sides to the conflict extensively used propaganda to advance their cause. Whether this was effective or not is a matter for conjecture and further study.

## **INTERNATIONAL AFFILIATIONS**

In 2015, the Boko Haram sect pledged allegiance to the Islamic State (IS) and now calls itself, *al-Wilaayat al-Islamiyyah Gharb Afriqiyyah* (the Islamic State's West African Province) (Abubakar, 2017). This move is not surprising as the sect had earlier boasted that it had links to Al-Qaeda through its purported spokesman, Abul Qaqa: "[i]t is true that we have links with al-Qaeda. They assist us, and we assist them" (Chothia, 2012; *BBC News*, 2012). Chiluwa and Ajiboye (2014) argue that "the sect gained popularity as an international terrorist group, after the declaration of the so-called independence of the Northern Mali in April 2012, when it was said to have joined forces with the Tuaregs" (p. 320). Ditz (2012) also argues that "the Nigerian

Mujahedeen joined forces with their Malian counterparts in the Tuaregs' control of the city of Gao" (p. 20).

## **CASUALTIES**

A major feature of the unending conflict is the alleged response of the state security agencies to the violence which has been brutal and counterproductive in the fight against its activities. This strategy by the agency is believed to be one of the reasons behind the sect's refusal to negotiate with the government as well as the escalation of violence. Human Rights Watch (2012) reveals:

During raids in communities, often in the aftermath of Boko Haram attacks, members of the security forces have executed men in front of their families; arbitrarily arrested or beaten members of the community; burned houses, shops, and cars; stolen money while searching homes; and, in at least one case, raped a woman. [In addition] Government security agencies routinely hold suspects incommunicado without charge or trial in secret detention facilities and have subjected detainees to torture or other physical abuse (p. 59).

The Boko Haram sect has therefore metamorphosed from a relatively peaceful but vocal Islamic fundamentalist group to a deadly and violent group. With intensity in its attacks, the sect's targets cut across race, gender, sex, gender, religion, ethnicity, political affiliation. The sect does not discriminate on the bases of any form of affiliations be it political, religious or economic. Boko Haram's victims include members of the security forces; government officials and politicians; traditional and religious leaders; members of international organizations and development partners operating in Nigeria; and students attending secular schools. It has consistently destroyed mosques and churches. Businesses were also targeted by the sect. Boko Haram's most frequent targets have been police stations, patrols and individual policemen at

home or in public who were off-duty or even retired. The sect has used petrol bombs, improvised explosive devices and armed assaults in these attacks (Forest, 2012). Onuoha and George (2015) argued that “the group has employed diverse violent tactics such as assassinations, ambush, drive-by shootings, and suicide bombings, among others in its attacks against security agents, religious and traditional rulers, worship centres, schools, traders and lately all non-members of the group” (p. 3). The sect was also alleged to be involved in bank robberies, cattle rustling and plundering of towns and villages to raise funds for their campaigns in Nigeria and in neighbouring Niger, Chad and Cameroon (Abubakar, 2016).

Boko Haram sect has similarly seized swathes of territory in north-eastern Nigeria, which it declared its caliphate. By January 2015 the sect was controlling a territory the size of Belgium, on which it imposed its own version of Islamic law, beheading suspected spies and stoning to death those convicted of adultery (Amnesty International, 2015). By September 2015 the insurgency has claimed an estimated 20,000 lives and displaced over two million people (*Daily Trust*, 2015). The United Nation’s Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA, 2016) estimated that “more than 20,000 people have been killed, countless women and girls abducted, and children drafted as suicide bombers, [...] 2.5 million people fled their homes out of which 2.2 million [...] are internally displaced since the conflict intensified in 2009” (p. 5). The report also disclosed that out of the 15 million people directly affected in Adamawa, Borno, Gombe and Yobe states, 7 million people need humanitarian assistance with children accounting for more than 50%. With an estimated force of 15,000 fighters (Amnesty International, 2015), the conflict has not only cost several thousands of lives, displaced over a million, destroyed hundreds of schools and government buildings but has devastated an already ravaged economy in the North East. Boko Haram was designated a terrorist organization in 2014 by the United States. The abduction of 276 schoolgirls from Chibok in Borno State in April 2014 gave the sect global notoriety. Even though abductions and forced marriages

occurred earlier but not on a large scale like the abduction of the Chibok schoolgirls (International Alert and UNICEF, 2016).

The media has become a crucial battlefield in the on-going Boko Haram onslaught against the Nigerian state. The Boko Haram insurgency ranks as one of the longest running stories in the Nigerian media for 17 years with intensity in the last 10 years. One of the major events that has stretched the endurance and professional expertise of Nigerian journalists is the Boko Haram insurgency. Carrying out their duties within the code of ethics of journalism have become a herculean task for newsmen and women. Reporters without Borders (RSF) ranked Nigeria 119th on the global ranking of 2018 World Press Freedom Index out of 180 countries. Nigeria got a global score of 37.41 against its 2017 figure of 39.69 moving from 116 to 122. The index, published annually by RSF since 2002, measures the level of media freedom in 180 countries, including the level of pluralism, media independence, and respect for the safety and freedom of journalists. The 2018 report took account of violations that occurred between January 1st and December 31st, 2017. There are still concerns over the growing difficulties Nigerian journalists encounter when covering subjects with national security ramifications, said a report by Reporters without Borders (RSF). The news media have not been spared in Boko Haram's campaign of violence. The Boko Haram sect had on several occasions gone after journalists perceived to be writing stories against its interest. A *Nigeria Television Authority (NTA)*, Maiduguri correspondent and a *Channel's Television* Cameraman in Kano were separately murdered; the headquarters of *Thisday* and *Daily Sun* newspapers in Abuja and Kaduna were bombed with several journalists losing their lives while many received varying degree of injuries. Many journalists were forced to relocate to other places from the war zone while others completely abandoned the profession for good. According to the Committee to Protect Journalists (2015), 70% of murdered Nigerian journalists covered politics, and 30 percent covered human rights. Although it did not spare journalists and media houses in its

brutal attacks (Abubakar, 2012; Smith, 2015), it relentlessly sought their attention using diverse means.

Various studies have been conducted to analyse the impact of Boko Haram's activities and how the news media can help in the fight to defeat it. In this regard, Okoro and Chukwuma (2012) analysed audience assessment of Nigerian broadcast media reportage of the Boko Haram insurgency argued: "broadcast media have not been timely in its reportage; [...] have not effectively played the surveillance function of the media; [...] have been biased in its reportage; [and] have glorified the act of terrorism" (pp. 41-58). In a like manner, Ekwueme and Obayi (2012) had conducted a study of an effective media response to the Boko Haram assault on Nigeria and concluded that "the mass media has the capacity to make all the difference in the effort against Boko Haram [and] if properly and effectively deployed, substantial part of the war against Boko Haram can be fought and won in the media" (p. 6). Also, in a study of print media framing of Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria, Odoemelam and Okoro (2013) found that "Nigerian newspapers report the Boko Haram insurgency in a predominantly policy response frame which shows that Nigerian newspapers reported government interventions in positive terms" (p. 86). Furthermore, Ayoola and Olaosun (2014) studied media representation of Boko Haram in some Nigerian newspapers and concluded that "contrary to scepticisms about daily newspapers as purveyors of misery and libel, [they] serve as a source of accurate information and perceptive analysis on Boko Haram" (p. 49). These studies focused mainly on audience assessment, news framing, and media response to the Boko Haram attacks.

Examining some of the factors influencing the reportage of conflicts, Hamid and Baba (2014) analysed the role of the media in resolving the Boko Haram conflict and identified among others lack of investigative journalism; and insensitivity to cultural differences and values as some of the factors responsible for the delay in resolving the conflict. Hamid and



Baba (2014)'s study also identified ethnic, religious, political and regional bias as some of the problems militating against professionalism in conflict coverage by Nigerian journalists. Similarly, a study carried out by Amadi (2015) on the structure of corruption stories in Nigerian newspapers found that "carelessness by Nigerian reporters have entrenched the lack of professionalism in news media reportage which by extension nurtures the transgressions and the corruption they are expected to report about" (p. 305).

Also, the influence of regional, tribal and religious bias could be discerned in the way some of the stories about the Boko Haram conflict were written with no consideration to the sensibilities of the readers. Eti (2012) conducted a content analysis of how three newspapers- *Punch*, *Daily Champion* and *New Nigerian* reported hostage taking in the Niger Delta and found: "conflict reporting in the Nigerian press is 'episodic'; framing of this conflict [...] is influenced by ethno-political factors; foreign policy implications; and the height of drama of the situation" (p. 23). Ugwu (2015) conducted an analysis of the Boko Haram Insurgency and argued that "government should make conscious efforts towards building a genuine integration of the various ethnic nationalities within the Nigerian nation through instituting the cultures of true democracy and good governance anchored on fairness, equity, accountability, and transparency in the polity" (p. 47).

Studies have also been conducted about the impact of Boko Haram's attacks on women. Barkindo et al. (2013), conducted a study on Boko Haram and gender-based violence against Christian women and children in North-Eastern Nigeria since 1999 and identified different types of violence not talked about in media or policy circles in Nigeria. They include rape, abduction, killing of Christian women and tacit attempts at conversion. The study concluded that these victims remain voiceless due to the deep-seated fear that they could be targeted or killed. Similarly, Onuoha and George (2015) analysed Boko Haram's use of female suicide bombing in Nigeria and argued that "any of the bombings may have been carried out by one of

the abducted Chibok girls, deceived or coerced into such mission” (p. 6). One of the first attempts to examine how the news media covered abduction of the Chibok girls concentrated on how media audiences reacted to the incident. Christian et al. (2015) investigated how selected Nigerian newspapers reported the Chibok schoolgirls’ abduction and found that mass media audiences have lost confidence in the government’s ability to rescue them. This study failed to examine how the news media have represented the abducted girls.

Similarly, Osita-Njoku and Chikere (2015) examined the consequences of the Boko Haram conflict on women in Northern Nigeria and concluded that “Boko Haram terrorism has resulted in the abduction of women and girls, arbitrary arrest of women by government security agents, use of women as pawns by the terrorist group, infliction of collective terror on women, use of women as wartime labour force, demoralization of women education and livelihood crisis” (p. 101). This study like many others before it, only focused on the consequences of how the conflict has affected women without examining how the news media has represented or portrayed women affected by the Boko Haram conflict. Despite the importance of understanding the extent of media representations of women in conflicts in view of their marginalization in media narratives, these studies only focused on the political, social and economic impact of the conflict on women. No study has been identified by this researcher, yet that has attempted to understand how the news media represented women in the Boko Haram conflict since it began in 2002. Although some of these studies and many others have focused on women, none have examined news media representation of women in the conflict.

This lack of interest is not new. Nigeria has faced persistent conflicts since independence. Unfortunately, there remains a gap in literature on how the Nigerian news media have represented women affected by these conflicts, including the 17-year Boko Haram conflict. Although previous studies have been conducted on the impact of the Boko Haram activities on the social, political, and economic sectors of society and how the news media have

portrayed the conflict, critical gaps exist on news media's representation of women in the conflict. This study represents one of the first major attempts at providing a broad overview of how the Nigerian news media have represented women affected by the Boko Haram conflict.

To conduct this study and fill the critical gaps that exist on news media representations of women in the Boko Haram conflict, this work attempted to answer four research questions which are:

- How have the news media represented women in the Boko Haram conflict?
- What were the dominant frames used by the Nigerian news media in representing women affected by the Boko Haram conflict?
- What were the factors that influenced these representations?
- How do news professionals view the impact of these representations on the position of women in the Boko Haram conflict?

## CHAPTER 4

### METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

This chapter examines the methodology selected for this thesis which is the mixed method approach. The mixed method approach was utilized using quantitative content analysis and qualitative approaches to examine how six major Nigerian newspapers have represented women in the Boko Haram conflict - *Guardian*, *Leadership*, *Daily Trust*, *Daily Sun*, *Nation*, and *Thisday*. This work focuses on key incidents related to the conflict that have affected women during the period under review. Sample size of the population for this research was determined by these incidents and the time frame considered relevant to news media's representation of women in the Boko Haram conflict. Newspapers selected for this study are not only national in outlook but are published consistently and regularly. Similarly, documents and archival materials used for the qualitative analysis were carefully selected based on their credibility and authenticity. The coding scheme and the sampling procedures are clearly spelt out with variables systematically identified, coded and analysed to draw conclusions.

This research uses quantitative and qualitative approaches. It adopts a quantitative content analysis to examine the manifest content of the selected newspapers to find out the patterns of frames used in representing women in the conflict. The mixed method approach was adopted to provide an in-depth understanding of the Boko Haram conflict by triangulating results; offsetting the weaknesses and strengths of the quantitative and qualitative methods; giving credibility and legitimacy to the research and its output; and providing diversity of views (Bryman, 2016). Deacon et al. (2007) suggested that "different methods may be appropriate to the different stages and focuses of your research, while the use of more than one analytical method has the advantage that the 'weaknesses of any single method, qualitative or quantitative, are balanced by the strengths of other methods' (p. 117). To avoid the problems associated with the use of a single method in an academic research of this nature, this work

utilized both quantitative and qualitative methods to balance their strengths and weaknesses to come out with a result that can be subjected to scientific inquiry. Bryman (2012) argued that the quantitative and qualitative approaches offer a “relatively complete picture of the extent of media coverage of the long-running and complex” (p. 305) conflict like the one under study, coupled with the meanings and representations of women these newspapers offer their readers. The mixed method approach therefore provides the opportunity for this study to be conducted strictly in line with the rules of a systematic research.

## **CONTENT ANALYSIS**

Content analysis is a widely used method in media studies. It is appropriate for this study as it explores the points of view of a wide range of stakeholders (journalists and media analysts) on news media representations of women in the Boko Haram conflict. Macnamara (2005) revealed that “Media content analysis became increasingly popular as a research methodology during the 1920s and 1930s for investigating the rapidly expanding communication content of movies; [and] proliferated as a research methodology in mass communication studies and social sciences with the arrival of television” (p. 2). A widely used definition of content analysis, which illustrated the early focus on quantitative analysis, was provided by Berelson (1952) who described it as “a research technique for the objective, systematic and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication” (p. 18). Macnamara (2005) disagreed with this definition because even the most scientific methods of social research cannot produce totally objective results. Berger and Luckmann (1967) argued that “in relation to media content, [...] media texts are open to varied interpretations and, as such, analysis of them cannot be objective” (p. 4). Macnamara (2005) also argued that “some criticize the definition as restrictive, pointing out that latent as well as manifest contents can be analysed” (p. 4). The early approach to content analysis was mainly criticized because of its focus on basic quantitative elements and an inherent assumption that quantitative factors indicated likely

social impact (Macnamara, 2005). Bryman (2012) also argued that content analysis is an “approach to the analysis of documents and texts [...] that seeks to quantify content in terms of predetermined categories and in a systematic and replicable manner” (p. 289). According to this definition, content analysis is a research method that quantifies words, texts, pictures and visuals in an analytical and systematic way.

Another definition offered by Krippendorff (2004) describes content analysis as a research method mainly used in journalism and communication research in the 1980s because of the “time-consuming and labour-intensive effort” (p. xiv) required to gather, transcribe, and code written data. Krippendorff (2004) identifies three distinguishing characteristics of modern content analysis: it is an empirically grounded method, exploratory in process, and predictive or inferential in intent; it transcends traditional notions of symbols, contents, and intents; has been forced to develop a methodology of its own, one that enables researchers to plan, execute, communicate, reproduce, and critically evaluate their analyses whatever the results. Krippendorff (2016) therefore defines content analysis as:

A research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts (or other meaningful matter) to the contexts of their use; [and] involves specialized procedures; it is learnable and divorceable from the personal authority of the researcher; [it] provides new insights, increases a researcher's understanding of particular phenomena, or informs practical action; [it is] is a scientific tool; and [it is] replicable (p. 18).

This definition also highlights the replicability of content analysis by other researchers. This means that other researchers applying the same system of inquiry, the same design and the same operational definitions to the same content could replicate the original findings. Content analysis seeks to examine and analyse words and visuals that are communicated in the media with no planning apart from the ones predetermined by those in the art of the communication, be it the news reporter, editor, feature writer or political analyst. Silverman

(2004) explains that this method is based on examination of the data for repeated cases of some kind, which are thoroughly identified across the data set, and collected together through a coding system. In this type of analysis, data that repeatedly appear as texts or visuals are systematically identified and codified for analysis by researchers. Other features identified by scholars in the application of content analysis in research is the use of statistics to interpret large data. In line with this argument, Deacon et al. (2007) argue that this approach to research quantifies salient and observable features of many texts using statistics to make “broader inferences about the processes and politics of representation” (pp. 118-119).

Quantitative content analysis was selected to complement the qualitative analysis for this study because of its numerous advantages. First, in examining and analysing representation of women in the Boko Haram conflict, data analysed for this research can be easily read and understood by other researchers. Krippendorff (2016) argues that “recognizing meanings is the reason that researchers engage in content analysis rather than in some other kind of investigative method” (p. 24). Also, content analysis is suitable for a study that involves a large quantity of data. This method was also selected due to its reliability in establishing a procedure of media representations. Lending credence to this, Bryman (2012) argues that this approach is a “safeguard against the temptation found in less difficult approaches of choosing items that seem to fit the event you may want to demonstrate or allowing your impression of an emerging form of representation to be shaped by your pre-existing biases and expectations” (p. 304). This approach is similarly appropriate because it offers this study the opportunity to analyse large quantity of data generated from six national newspapers spread over four years (2012-2015) coupled with interviews, questionnaires and historical facts from books, journals and reports. Content analysis is therefore one of the methods selected for this study because it is replicable, systematic, methodical and objective.

## QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

Flick (2014) defines qualitative research as a social inquiry “interested in analysing the subjective meaning or the social production of issues, events, or practices by collecting non-standardised data and analysing texts and images rather than numbers and statistics” (p. 542). Schwandt (2004) also describes this type of research design as a method for “generating data (e.g. unstructured interviewing, observation, document analysis) and non-statistical means of analysing and interpreting those data” (p. 247). Qualitative data can emerge from a wide range of sources including field studies like observations or interviews; photographs or other visual data such as video or film recordings; unobtrusive data in the form of documents such as company reports, business plans, written statements, accounts and contracts (Schwandt, 2004; Gray, 2014; Silverman, 2014; and Flick, 2014). Silverman (2014) explains that qualitative research involves “verbal description of real-life situations; [...] describes phenomena in context, interprets processes or meanings, uses theoretically based concepts, and seeks understanding; [...] and studies phenomena in the contexts in which they arise through observation and /or recording or the analysis of printed and internet material (pp. 4- 6). Qualitative research is highly contextual as data is generated, collected and analysed in a natural and local setting from people’s expressions and activities often over long periods of time (Flick,2014; and Gray, 2014).

Central to qualitative design is the use of texts which represent the essential data on which findings are based, the basis of interpretations, and the central medium for presenting and communicating findings (Flick, 2014). A major feature of qualitative research that sets it apart from other methods of social inquiry is its ‘reflexivity’ which allows for the researchers’ reflections on their research as part of the process of knowledge production. Gray (2014) argues that Qualitative data are open to multiple interpretations [which] can include the voices of those being studied as well as that of the researcher; [...] the researcher’s own reflections on their



actions and observations in the field and their feelings become part of the data (p. 162). Silverman (2014) identifies one of the main strengths of this approach as its ability to study phenomena which are simply unavailable elsewhere.

A major criticism of this method as identified by Silverman (2014) is the problem of reliability particularly where the researcher might experience shortage of space like in journal articles and with readers having to contend with “little more than brief, persuasive, data extracts [while] the degree of the reliability of the interpretation of transcripts maybe gravely weakened by a failure to note apparently trivial, but often crucial, pauses, overlaps or body movements” (p. 20). Another criticism of qualitative research is about the extent to which the subjective interpretations about a phenomenon under investigation by the researcher are thorough or not, or whether any attempt was made by the researcher to analyse less clear or contradictory data (Silverman, 1989; 2014). While the qualitative approach offers an insight into the study of a social phenomenon like the Boko Haram conflict, the choice of the mixed method approach provides a better understanding of the issues when the qualitative and quantitative approaches were combined. Bowen (2017) argues that “by examining information collected through different methods, the researcher can corroborate findings across data sets and thus reduce the impact of potential biases that can exist in a single study” (p. 28).

The other method used in the mixed method approach in this study is the qualitative analysis of trends demonstrated by the quantitative content analysis. The qualitative analysis used documentary data from newspaper accounts, reports and the translation of *YouTube* videos and audio materials, released by the Boko Haram sect. The qualitative analysis also relied on historical, descriptive and analytical approaches based on the information generated from semi-structured interviews with news editors, reporters, and media analysts. Questions for these interviews focused mainly on the issues of news media representations and coverage of the conflict. These respondents were journalists who have covered the Boko Haram crisis in the

conflict zone of Borno state. Questionnaires were issued through the post, by hand to reporters in Maiduguri and Abuja or emailed to participants where it was impossible to carry out a face to face interview in Abuja. The questionnaires were issued between April and August 2016. Some media analysts were also interviewed. The respondents were divided into three categories: reporters, editors and media analysts using separate questions while some of the questions overlapped.

The categories of questions revolve around the dominant frames used by the news media in representing women in the Boko Haram conflict; some of the factors that influence these representations; factors that determine news media representations; editorial policies of news media organizations; factors that influence news media reportage of the conflict; the pressures and challenges journalists encountered while covering the Boko Haram conflict; and why the news media relied on foreign news media as their major sources of news stories in the conflict. Out of the 40 questionnaires administered, 20 were answered by journalists made up of 14 news reporters and 6 news editors while out of the 6 administered to media analysts, 2 were answered. One of the major reasons for this response rate from journalists might be due to their reluctance to be involved in an academic exercise of this nature. Some of the journalists that refused to return the questionnaires attributed their refusal to time factor while others expressed fears that the sect members might come after them. When this researcher reminded them of the anonymity the research offers through consent forms, they still refused to participate in the interview. This invariably demonstrates the difficulties academics conducting research of this nature encounter which is compounded by security concerns. Six Boko Haram's video messages related to women were directly downloaded from *YouTube*, translated from Hausa language and analysed. Secondary data was also generated from library and online archives. This study also drew upon the personal experiences of the researcher who practiced as a female journalist in the conflict zone for 25 years from 1990-2015 for the state-owned

Borno Radio and Television Corporation (BRTV) as well as a media adviser to the governor under whose watch the Boko Haram sect became violent and as an editor with a quarterly magazine based in the conflict zone of Maiduguri -*The Beacon* magazine.

Documents used in the qualitative analysis were carefully selected based on their credibility and authenticity. Credibility refers to the extent to which a research account is believable and appropriate, with reference to the level of agreement between participants and the researcher (Mills et al., 2010). Credibility is also ensuring whether the document's information is honest and accurate (Scott, 2006). Credibility therefore refers to research sources that are not only authentic but are believably true, correct and trustworthy (OED Online, 2016). Authenticity on the other hand is when a research source is what it appears to be. Kridel (2019) argues that "authenticity addresses whether the materials are genuine or of questionable origin, and whether their production is original and reliable and has not been subsequently altered [and is] the most fundamental criterion for all documentary research" (p. 1). To determine the authenticity of research materials, there is the need to find out whether they are genuine and of unquestionable origin (Myers, 2009). David and Sutton (2004) also argue that "authenticity relates to whether the text is what it claims to be; [...] and that the author of the text is whom we think it is [while] credibility refers to the level of trust we can place in the contexts of the text" (p. 118). Note (2017) also highlights some key questions that needed to be considered while verifying the authenticity of a primary source. They are: whether the information in the record such as names, dates, places, events, and relationships are logical, or not Does it make sense in the context of time, place, and the people being researched? Does more than one reliable source give the same information? What other evidence supports the information in the source (Note, 2017).

This work attempted to use credible and high-quality scholarly resources to back up and support the arguments in the literature which will translate into credible results. Scholarly

works written by experts in the field which are peer reviewed and found in the Library were used for this work. To assess the credibility and authenticity of sources used in this research, some of the questions asked included: Whether they are credible; supported by evidence that is referenced by the source? Can the information be verified by other literature on the same topic? Is the tone objective, impartial, free from obvious errors such as spelling or grammar; and are they written by scholars with expertise in the field? (Merriam Library, California State University (2010) test on C.R.A.A.P (Currency, Relevance, Authority, Accuracy, and Purpose). Due to the nature of this research, up-to-date recently published peer reviewed scholarly sources were included. This research also relied on online materials using the search engine ‘google scholar’ to access scholarly information. While using archival materials, this research attempted to be as logical and methodical as possible.

## **STUDY DESIGN**

Content categories were developed for the analysis of the newspapers studied. This study further developed some content classifications to determine and analyse the nature of the coverage. Consequently, articles related to the conflict and women categorised according to the following classifications: hard news, feature articles, editorials, opinion pieces and news commentaries among others were selected for this study.

## **FRAME ANALYSIS**

The building blocks for the framing analysis in this study are laid by Iyengar, (1991); Entman, (1993); Fairhurst et al, (1996); McCombs, (2004); de Vreese, (2007); and Scheufele & Iyengar, (2010). One of the major researches this work built on is Entman’s (1993, 2004) study which identified 4 functions that frames perform vis-a-viz problem definition or identification, causal analysis or establish causes, moral judgement, and remedy promotion or proffer solutions to the problems identified. Borrowing from Entman (1993, 2004), this thesis identified the Boko

Haram conflict as a problem; singled out how the news media represents women in the conflict for examination; identified and interpreted findings and major themes in these representations; proffered solutions to problems identified and offered recommendations. This is corroborated by Kitzinger (2007) who argued that “framing researchers are often concerned with at least 4 key questions: How is the problem defined? How are the key players portrayed? Who is presented as responsible? What solutions are proposed” (p. 139)? Accordingly, some of the key questions that this study has attempted to answer include how the problem of insurgency is defined by journalists; who the key players are? Who the journalists are blaming for this conflict in their reports? What solutions are been proffered by key players s?

Another steppingstone for this research is the study by Iyengar, (1991) who identified episodic and thematic frames that might influence public perceptions. Episodic frames convey specific events or characteristics related to an issue, whereas thematic coverage emphasizes longer-term trends or contextual factors (Iyengar, 1991). For instance, a frame that is episodic in a study of the abduction of the Chibok school girls might focus on the explicit facts about the incident, while a thematic framing of the abduction might focus on the issues surrounding the abduction such as the implication on girl child education and the long term effect of this abduction on the victims if and when they are rescued. This work also built on the foundation laid by Nacos (2005) in her analysis of the portrayal of female terrorists in the media based on a content analysis of U.S. and non-American English language print and broadcast news where she identified similar framing patterns found in the news about female politicians and female terrorists (Nacos, 2005). Nacos (2005) explained that these two different groups of women, one often seen as the "legitimate" political actors (women in politics) and the other the "illegitimate" political actors (women in terrorism), were both portrayed using similarly negative stereotypes.

Some of the frames adopted for this study reinforce earlier arguments in the literature that the type of frames employed by journalists depend on the issue under examination (Okoro & Odoemelam, 2013). Although some of the frames adopted reflect reality, others are rooted in conventional gender stereotypes. For instance, in a study on foreign media framing of Boko Haram insurgency: a critical analysis of BBC and Aljazeera online coverage, Ezeah and Emmanuel (2016) argue that “media contents have the propensity to define the reality of a target audience” (p. 33) by conveying and transmitting stereotypes and ideological postulations about groups, individuals, events, and nations. Because the news media continue to use different framing patterns in news reportage about women and men (Norris, 1997; Nacos, 2005; Alat, 2005; Ezeah & Emmanuel, 2016; and La & Pickett, 2019), this study similarly drew a parallel with previous studies on framing patterns in conflicts and disasters (Iyengar 1991; Maslog et al., 2006; Brunken, 2006; Evans, 2010; Chiluwa, 2010; Eti, 2012; Okoro & Odoemelam, 2013; Okoro & Chukwuma, 2014; Gwadabe, 2015; and Chime-Nganya et al., 2017) and adopted some of the frames used to find out how the Nigerian news media represented women in the Boko Haram conflict.

In their analysis of Nigerian newspapers framing of President Mohammadu Buhari’s medical leave to the United Kingdom, Chime-Nganya et al. (2017) found that newspapers use the political frame more than the response, human interest, powerlessness, religious, economic and death-rumour frames in their coverage of Buhari’s medical leave. These frames also align with findings by de Vreese et al. (2001), that newspapers use news frames to select, organise and emphasis certain aspects of reality to the exclusion of others. The political frame emphasizes escalation of political tension. It points at conflict of interest for power and scarce resources among geo-political regions, parties and groups. Linked to the political frame is the conspiracy frame also adopted in this study. Explanations for the rise in violence by the sect are diverse one of which is conspiracy theories. This is because conspiracy theories among the

political elite within the period under review played out between the two major political parties in Nigeria i.e. Peoples' Democratic party (PDP) and the All Progressive Congress (APC) with regards to the Boko Haram conflict. Although there were other political parties who were inactive within the period under study, members of these two parties blamed each other for the conflict which also dominated news media narratives. For instance, Northern political elites were accused of attempting to bring down the government of President Jonathan, a Southern Christian by sponsoring the crises to rally Southern support; while the Southern elites were accused of secretly working and sponsoring the sect to destroy the North ahead of 2015 general elections to weaken its bid for the Presidency (Oladeji & Agbaji, 2011; Ogbonnaya, 2011; Adeyemo 2012; Onah, 2014; and Babalola, 2014). The economic frame on the other hand relates to the economic consequences of events on an individual, group, institution, region, or country (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000).

The Boko haram conflict is like the hurricane crises studied by Brunken (2006) and the pipeline vandalization studied by Eti (2012). This research similarly adopted some of the frames used by these 2 studies. For instance, Brunken (2006) examined the Hurricane crisis and adopted the following categories: conflict, human interest, economic and moral frames as content categories to newspaper coverage of the crisis. Building on Iyengar (1991), Eti (2012) also examined how the *Champion*, the *Punch* and *New Nigerian* newspapers report crises like kidnapping and hostage taking and concluded that "conflict reporting in the Nigerian press is 'episodic'. Again, most crises and conflicts in Nigeria are often framed by journalists as ethnic, targeted at a tribe (Chiluwa, 2010; and Eti, 2012). Eti's (2012) study on pipelines vandalization found that, framing of these conflict behaviours were influenced by ethno-political factors, foreign policy implications, and the height of drama of the situation. In his research on the representation of the Niger Delta crisis in the Nigerian press, Chiluwa (2010) argued that the pattern of labelling "produces a highly negative characterisation of the key players in the crisis;

[and describes the Nigerian press as a] vehicle for spreading half-truths and even propaganda” (p. 11). This is due to the tendencies of the Nigerian press to focus on the activities of the Niger Delta insurgents at the expense of what Chilwa (2010) referred to as “more important aspects of the Niger Delta situation, viz., unfair distribution of the oil wealth, environmental degradation, political marginalisation of the people” (p. 11).

The label frame was also adopted in this study to examine how the Nigerian news media characterised the women in the conflict and whether this labelling reflects the patriarchal nature of the society or not and the dynamics behind this labelling. This is because the media interpret and frame messages within the same cultural context as do naive actors (Arno, 1984). Norris (1997) argued that “journalists commonly work with gendered ‘frames’ to simplify, prioritize, and structure the narrative flow of events when covering women and men in public life” (p. 6). In her study of news coverage of violence against women, Alat (2006) found that framing patterns included the “blaming attitude by both politicians and the citizenry, questioning perpetrators’ mental status and women’s adherence to gender norms, [which] work to exonerate male perpetrators” (p. 295). Alat’s (2006) findings highlighted the attribution of responsibility frame which this study adopted. Similarly, Alat’s (2006) analysis suggested that women are often blamed for the violence exerted upon them which draws from the pillars of patriarchy. The Boko Haram’s instrumental targeting of women and news media representations of women in the conflict is in part due to patriarchal norms and values. North east Nigeria is similar to Turkey which is a Muslim predominated and conservative society steeped in gender stereotypes, tradition and culture (Alat, 2006). This study therefore adopted the patriarchal frame to find out whether news media representations of women in the conflict reflect societal norms or not.

Nacos (2005) identified frames such as: physical appearance, family connection, terrorist for the sake of love, women’s lib/equality, tough-as-males/tougher-than-men, and



bored, naïve, out-of-touch-with-reality frames as some of the reporting patterns, images, and stereotypes mostly used in the way the media portray female terrorists. Explaining the physical appearance frame, Nacos (2005) argued that the media find the physical characteristics of women in politics news-worthy, like the appearance and the type of clothes worn by female terrorists. With regards to the family connection frame, Nacos (2005) explained that the news media are inclined to define female politicians based on their family status; “when women terrorists are especially pretty, reporters wonder why they are not married or engaged; [or their] references to and explorations of female terrorists’ family backgrounds that might explain, or not explain, their violent deeds” (p. 440). Linking the family connection frame to terrorists for the sake of love frame, Nacos (2005) argued that “one can construe even a politician for the sake of love frame [...] when a woman is appointed to serve out the term of her deceased husband; [similar to] the stereotype of the female terrorist following her lover or husband or perhaps her father, brother, or cousin into terrorist groups and activities” (p. 441). This confirmed Morgan’s (2001) position in an interviewer in the *Washington Post* that female terrorists are “almost always lured into it by a father, a brother or most commonly by a lover” (p. C10). The case of one of the rescued women crying to be allowed to go back to her Boko Haram husband (Idris, 2015) highlights terrorists for the sake of love frame.

Describing the women’s lib/equality frame, Nacos (2005) explained that most female politicians attempt to cultivate a positive media image of an accomplished official while avoiding the negative stereotype of the too aggressive feminist as against female terrorists who were not concerned about their public image and have often been described as ‘women’s lib extremists’. Nacos (2005) argued that this stereotype persists to date as “contemporary news still explains the motives of female terrorists as the expression of gender equality or the struggle to achieve gender equality quite frequently” (p. 443). Drawing a parallel between female politicians who rise to the top and are often described as ‘tough’; and the female terrorists who

are described as ‘fanatical’; Nacos (2005) explained that the tough-as-males/tougher-than-men frame can also be found in the news media’s “notion of the female terrorist who has to prove that she belongs, by being more cruel and deadly” (p. 444). While arguing that the bored, naïve, out-of-touch-with-reality frame is the only stereotype without any obvious parallels in the representation of women politicians by the news media, Nacos (2005) argued that “with respect to female terrorists the notion of the naïve, bored, non-political, out-of-touch-with-reality woman who turns to terrorism, too, is perpetuated in the media—mostly by news sources, sometimes by reporters themselves” (p. 445).

In the wake of the suicide bombing by women and girls in the Boko Haram conflict in 2014-2015 with a conservative fatality rate of 73 people including the female suicide bombers (Onuoha & George, 2015), this study adopted the frames used by Nacos (2005) to study how Nigerian news media represented women in the conflict. Similarly, in their analysis of how the mass media frame Boko Haram’s female suicide bombers, La and Pickett (2019) identified “the liable agents frame, which is utilized mostly in local sources, and the vulnerable and helpless girls frame, in international sources” (p. 512). Borrowing from this study, this work also adopted the powerless/helpless girls frame as portrayed in most international news about conflicts, because the Boko Haram conflict has assumed international proportion with the group’s affiliation to the Islamic State (IS). Nacos (2005) explained that some framing patterns with respect to terrorism have strong effects on the perceptions and reaction of news receivers and argued that “although contemporary newsrooms are more diverse than 25 years ago, entrenched prejudices and stereotypical perceptions have not disappeared” (p. 437). Building on these previous researches, this study examined news media representations of women in the Boko Haram conflict with specific benchmarks called ‘framing categories which include political frame, economic frame, religious frame, ethnic frame, powerless/helpless frame, attribution of responsibility frame, labelling frame, human interest frame, conspiracy frame,

patriarchal and gendered frames. Others are physical appearance, family connection, terrorist for the sake of love, women's lib/equality, tough-as-males/tougher-than-men, and bored, naïve, out-of-touch-with-reality frames.

## **CODING CATEGORIES**

Similarly, the sources the stories were based upon were broken down into news stories, interviews, press conferences/briefings, press releases, and agency reports. To determine the nature of prominence attached to the crises by the newspapers, the following classifications were also made based on how each article appeared on the pages: Front/cover page (FP) stories means very important stories; Back page (BP) stories are next in prominence; Inside Page (IP) stories are the stories that appeared in the first 10 pages of the newspaper and the centre spread (CS) and are the next in prominence while the other pages are not important.

## **SAMPLE**

The six Nigerian national newspapers selected for this research are: *Guardian*, *Daily Trust*, *Daily Sun*, *Leadership*, *Nation*, and *Thisday* because they are among the leading and most influential English language newspapers in Nigeria. Copies of the articles were retrieved online in the UK while the hard copies were harvested from newspaper archives in the Nigerian National Library in Abuja in April- June 2016. To ensure that sample population for data used in this research is broad, credible and representative, criteria used in selecting these newspapers were based on the ownership patterns expressed through the Publishers' political and religious affiliations, geographical, ethnic, and regional bias. These interests are also manifested through the 6 newspapers' editorial policies. Another major criterion was the newspapers' availability online and in print. This is because newspapers coverage of the Boko Haram insurgency has so far reflected regional, ethnic, religious, and political bias in line with the concept of regional parallelism (Yusha'u, 2010; Tobeckukwu, 2007; and Okoro & Odoemelam, 2013). This

corroborates (Bourgault, 1995; Malan, 2005; and Mabweazara, 2015) who explained that media systems are influenced by the political, social, economic, historical and cultural forces within which they operate. Tobechukwu (2007) who examined the performance of the press after the annulment of the June 12 presidential elections found that the style of coverage reflects tribal, ethnic, biased, opinionated and personal perspectives. These trends have continued to define the pattern of news coverage even today. The newspapers' ownership patterns were used as one of the major criteria for selection to determine whether the political, religious affiliations, geographical, ethnic, and regional bias of the publishers have influenced their editorial policies. Other criteria used in selecting these newspapers are their editorial policies and availability online and in print.

A major issue that has shaped the contents and editorial policies of newspapers in Nigeria is the ownership pattern (Babalola, 2002). From pro-independence struggle to independence, ownership and control of the Nigerian press have dictated how the press operated (Galadima & Enighe, 2001; Jibo & Okoosi-Simbine, 2003; Tobechukwu, 2007; and Obijiofor & Hanutsch, 2011) which are in line with the characteristics of regional parallelism. News making in Nigeria is also bedevilled by interests of the owners. According to Fairclough (2001), media proprietors often exercise power over their consumers in that "they have sole producing rights and can therefore determine what is included or excluded" (p. 50). Because of the importance of ownership, newspapers that were selected for this study are owned by a cross section of Nigerians. Their Publishers are *ThisDay*, Nduka Obiagbena; *Guardian*, Alex Ibru; *Daily Sun*, Orji Uzor Kalu; *Leadership*, Sam Nda-Isiaih; the *Nation*, Bola Ahmed Tinubu while *Daily Trust* is controlled and managed by a board of trustees. These owners have different political, ethnic, religious, and regional bias. As a result, the ownership pattern of the publishers was a criteria for the selection of these newspapers.

The influence ownership has over media production and content is also glaring when it comes to the coverage of political activities and events. Jibo and Okoosi-Simbine (2003) referred to this concept as ‘proprietor interest’ and that the Nigerian press was essentially a political press. Objectivity is difficult in the Nigerian news media due to support for Publishers’ political causes (Jibo & Okoosi-Simbine, 2003; and Tobechukwu, 2007). This is because the political leanings of the owners are reflected in the content of the newspaper. For example, *Leadership*’s Publisher is Sam Nda-Isaiah, former Presidential aspirant for the All Progressive Congress (APC), perceived as an opposition paper (Gbadebo, 2014) while Nduka Obaigbena’s *This Day* is considered a pro-government newspaper as its Publisher is a close ally of the ruling People’s Democratic Party (PDP) (Gambrell, 2013). Closely related to the ownership pattern are the regional and ethnic criteria which refer to the region where the Publishers come from and their ethnic identity. Nigeria is officially grouped into six zones of North west, North east, North central, South west, South east and South south. Malaolu (2004) argued that “news media in Nigeria have become champions of ethnic interests” (p. 48). For example, *Leadership* is based in Abuja, Northern Nigeria while *This Day* is headquartered in Lagos. *Leadership* and the *Daily Trust* newspapers are in Abuja, the federal capital territory to serve the interests of the North (Idris, 2015 personal communication). To reflect the regional and ethnic bias of the owners, the *Nation* is headquartered in Lagos which serves the interest of the Yoruba from South west Nigeria. The ethnic and regional bias of the Publishers are evident in a study of the pattern of frames adopted by Nigerian newspapers in the coverage of Boko Haram insurgency by Okoro and Odoemelam (2013) who concluded that, the *Daily Sun* newspaper used the ethnic frame to cover the insurgency due to its geographical location. Hassan (2009) also revealed that the print media report crisis in line with the interests of their owners and ethnic affiliations. The Publisher’s ethnic and regional bias were also used as criteria for the selection of these newspapers.

Also tied to the Publishers' regional and ethnic bias are their religious affiliations. As a result, the religious inclinations of the Publishers were also taken into consideration in the selection of these newspapers. Orji Uzor Kalu, *Daily Sun* Publisher is a Christian from the South east; Bola Tinubu owner of the *Nation* is a Muslim from South west; Sam Nda-Isiaih, *Leadership* Publisher is a Christian from the North; Alex Ibru owner of *Guardian* is a Christian from South south; Nduka Obiagbena is a Christian from South south Nigeria while *Daily Trust* is owned by a board of trustees who are about 80% Muslims within the period under review. Both Muslim and Christian owners are adequately represented in the selection.

The editorial policies of these newspapers revolve around social responsibility and development journalism which encapsulates the tenets of objectivity, truth, fairness, factual, balancing of news stories, and pursuance of justice and commitment to the integrity and sovereignty of the federal Republic of Nigeria. For example, the *Guardian* newspaper claims to be committed to the best traditions and ideals of republican democracy. The *Nation's* editorial policies provide the public with information they need to be free and self-governing in a democratic society. The *Leadership*, on the other hand, stands for the pursuit of truth, good governance and defence of what is right. *ThisDay* claims to be an agent of change and innovation with an unwavering commitment to the spread of information with integrity. *Daily Sun* newspaper's editorial policies include: to practice journalism with impact and objectivity; while *Daily Trust* newspaper upholds the libertarian principle with profound regard for social responsibility in their news coverage and editorial comments. These newspapers were also selected based on these editorial policies, because one of the aims of this research is to find out whether the news media have represented women in the Boko Haram conflict within the tenets of social responsibility and development journalism as enshrined in their editorial policies.

The six newspapers were also selected based on their availability online and in print and the spread of their circulation. These newspapers are listed among the major national

newspapers in Nigeria, owned and run by Nigerians with online versions which can be accessed anywhere in the world. These papers have maintained visibility in print and online for a considerable period and are still active (BBC, 2011; World Press, 2012; and Onlinenewspapers.com, 2012). Apart from the fact that these newspapers are registered in Nigeria, they have consistently sustained publication within the period under review (2012-2015). They are among the leading and most influential English language newspapers in Nigeria and are readily available all over the country. The in-print copies of these selected newspapers can be found all over Nigeria even as far as Biu, Biu local government area of Borno state. For instance, *Daily Trust* newspapers are easily and readily available in Borno state same day it is printed. Again, due to their availability online, the copies that could not be accessed in the National Library where the hard copies are kept, were available online making the study easier. Another defining criterion for the selection of these 6 newspapers was at this researchers' discretion which also considered their regional spread. Therefore, 2 newspapers were selected from the North (*Daily Trust* and *Leadership*); 1 from the South East (*Daily Sun*); 1 from South west (*Nation*) and 2 from the Lagos axis (*ThisDay* and *Guardian*). Although there are other newspapers with national outlook, and their Publishers from different regions of Nigeria, with online and in print availability, and their copies found all over Nigeria, , the choice of *ThisDay*, *Daily Trust*, *Daily Sun*, *Leadership*, the *Nation* and *Guardian* newspapers were at the researcher's discretion. It is hoped that additional newspapers with similar criteria will be included in future research of this nature.

Four key incidents were selected for analysis. They are threats from Boko Haram leader Abubakar Shekau (2<sup>nd</sup> October 2012) and Boko Haram's first attack on women (9<sup>th</sup> February 2013); abduction of the 276 Chibok schoolgirls (14<sup>th</sup> April 2014); female suicide bombings (26<sup>th</sup> July 2014); and rescue of women abducted by the Boko Haram sect (28<sup>th</sup> April 2015). The study period covers four years from 2012-2015. The Boko Haram sect commenced the

instrumental use and attacks of women as a strategy of war during this period. The period of analysis covers one week for each key incident- three days before and four days after the event. The three days before each key incident were examined to find out if there were any predisposing signals covered by the news media, indicating that such an attack might happen. Events surrounding Boko Haram's attacks on government establishments in Maiduguri, Borno state capital in 2009 were preceded by the noticeable presence and movements of 'strange' people with swords and other weapons into Maiduguri and its environs. The public raised concerns on the influx of these strange persons dressed in turbans into the city of Maiduguri. At that time, only a few newspapers covered this influx and its security implications. These reports were ignored by the government and a few days later Boko Haram struck (*Daily Trust* 10/08/2009; *Vanguard*, 30/07/2009; *ThisDay*, 29/07/ 2009).

The four days after the incident when the pages of the newspapers were saturated with news reports about the incident were also selected. These days were selected because the news media in Nigeria cover stories especially about disasters and conflicts prominently in the first few days of occurrence. But as days go by, the attention of the media is diverted to other stories and events. And by the time the story runs for a few days, it is often dropped by the news media. This might relate to what Meoller (1999) refers to as 'compassion fatigue'. Stories of dramatic events in Nigeria hardly last a week. The seven days were therefore selected to compare news media coverage of Boko Haram's activities preceding any major attack, during the attack and after such attack on women. Results from the days selected are expected to determine and compare the volume of news reports that revolve round the activities of the sect and to find out whether differences exist or not.

Newspapers were selected instead of television, radio or online news media as the source of primary data due to the many advantages in using newspapers to conduct a research of such magnitude. Maney and Oliver (2001) explained that newspapers have always remained



the major source of data for most historical and comparative research. McCombs et al. (1997) also argued that newspapers play a significant role early in an event or issue's lifespan because they enable people to keep track of these issues earlier than television. Other reasons for choosing newspapers as the source of primary data in this study are presented in Table 4: 3. Newspapers were also selected instead of magazines because they are readily available and consistent in their publication. Nigerian magazines do not have a long life span due to high production costs, poor electricity supply and poor management style among other factors. Similarly, the advertising market is poor in a highly competitive industry. These factors have affected the production of magazines on a regular basis making magazines difficult to be used in this research that required consistent data for four years.

## **STUDY POPULATION AND SAMPLE SIZE**

The sample size was determined by the event and the relevant time frame. The population of this study consists of all the issues/editions of the selected newspapers published in Nigeria within the 4-year study period with a focus on one week of coverage for each event - a total of 404 articles for the six newspapers. The selection of the four-year 2012-2015 study period was purposively made. The major criterion used in selecting these four incidences was because women were the major victims affected. This was the actual period the Boko Haram sect changed its tactics from 'no attack' of women policy to more systematic and targeted abductions, rapes, forced marriages, murder and the use of women as human shields and suicide bombers. This began in 2012 and climaxed in 2014-2015. The four key incidents examined are by no means exhaustive but are considered significant and indicative of the extent of Boko Haram's systematic attacks and atrocities against women. An attack that was excluded was the massacre of 59 schoolboys in Federal Government college Buni Yadi, in Yobe state, North east Nigeria on 25/02/2014 by the Boko Haram sect (Hemba, 2014). According to reports by *Reuters* on 26/02/2014 and *Aljazeera* 06/03/2014, an undisclosed number of female students

were also abducted during the overnight attack as the school's 24 buildings, including staff quarters, were completely burned to the ground. The exclusion of this attack was not because it is insignificant compared to the four incidents selected for this study as lives of schoolchildren were also lost and schoolgirls abducted. This incidence was purposely excluded at the researcher's discretion and in line with the target of this study which is women.

According to Human Rights Watch (2014), Boko Haram systematically abducted women and girls from their homes or from the streets during attacks on their communities from 2009 to early 2013. These abductions took place most often in Boko Haram's then-strongholds of Maiduguri, the Borno State capital, or Damaturu, the capital of neighbouring Yobe State. Videos however released by Boko Haram's leader in October 2012, January, and May 2013 suggest three key motives for the initial abductions: to retaliate against the government's alleged detention of family members including wives of the sect's leaders; to punish students for attending Western schools; and to forcefully convert Christian women and girls to Islam (Zenn, 2013; and Human Rights Watch, 2014). Human Rights Watch's findings suggest that women and girls were also being used for tactical reasons to lure security forces to an ambush, force payment of a ransom, or for prisoner exchange (Human Rights Watch, 2014).

One of the major incidents that marked the shift to women becoming major victims of this conflict was when Boko Haram's leader Abubakar Shekau threatened to abduct and kidnap women and children in retaliation for the arrest of family members of several Boko Haram leaders by security agencies in 2012. An era of the instrumental use of women in response to corresponding tactics by the Nigerian government therefore began in the history of the insurgency. Zenn (2013) argued that these attacks were driven by the desire for revenge, religious animosity, lust for supremacy and conquest of what Boko Haram labels as the 'weaker infidels.' Other reasons for this change in war strategy by the insurgents was the intention to lure Christian women to convert to Islam as well as the intention to humiliate, intimidate and

dishonour victims, their families and their Christian communities (Zenn, 2013; and Barkindo et al., 2013). Boko Haram members reportedly disguised as women in veils were also arrested during that period (2012-2013). Borrowing from Nacos (2005) and Lemish (2006) the alleged disguise by Boko Haram members as women reflects a pattern seen in the adaptive responses of other terrorist organizations in times of unique pressure on men. Zenn (2014) attributed this gendered shift in the conflict to “purely instrumental reasons as women ‘do not yet appear to be actively and willingly participating in violence to a significant extent’” (p. 1). The threat of retaliation by the Boko Haram leader in 2012 and the first recorded murder of women in 2013 were the first incidents analyzed in this study.

With threats of retaliation by Abubakar Shekau leader on 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2012 which was uploaded on *YouTube*, *Twitter* and *Face book*, rumors of abductions and forced marriages began to surface towards the end of 2012 and 2013. The sect also made good its threat to attack women when 9 female polio immunization workers were brutally murdered on 8<sup>th</sup> February 2013 in Kano state, north central Nigeria. Never in the history of the attacks of Boko Haram have women been the targets of killing. During the attack, gunmen opened fire on two different groups of polio immunization workers who were waiting for materials and drugs to commence the exercise. Eyewitness accounts disclosed that the attackers stormed a primary health clinic at Unguwa Uku in Tarauni local government area and Hotoron Haye at Eastern by-pass when the vaccination workers were about to go out for a mop-up exercise to conclude the four-day polio vaccination campaign. The twin attacks took place about an hour apart. The study period is 26 September-2 October 2012 and 6– 12 February 2013.

The second major incident analyzed was the abduction of 276 female students of the Government Girls Secondary School in Chibok local government area of Borno state, north east Nigeria. Chibok is the headquarters of Chibok Local government area - one out of the 27 Local government areas that make up Borno state. It is an agrarian community with an

estimated 66,105 people according to the 2006 national census. It is located about 130 kilometres, Southwest of Maiduguri, the Borno state capital and west of the Sambisa forest [the presumed hideout of the Boko Haram sect] covering an area of 1,350 square kilometres. The local government area has a predominantly Christian community. The people in this area speak the Kibaku language. It is in this community that the Boko Haram sect invaded the Government Girls Secondary School and abducted 276 girls who were sitting for their General Certificate of Education (GCE) examination. Accounts from some of the residents of Chibok, interviewed by *BBC* Hausa service indicate that the attack started about 10 o'clock at night on 14<sup>th</sup> April 2014 and lasted into the early hours of the next day. The abducted girls were aged between 16 and 18. Many of the girls managed to jump out of the trucks while some clung to tree branches as they were being ferried through the bush. They later found their way back home. This was not really the first time that Boko Haram insurgents had attacked a school. In February 2014, the sect had attacked Federal Government College Buni Yadi in Yobe State, North East Nigeria killing many male students but ordered the female students to go back home and get married instead of schooling (*BBC News*, 26/02/2014; *Reuters*, 6/02/2014).

News of the abduction of the Chibok School girls were received with scepticism. One of the major issues of controversy was about the actual number of girls initially abducted. Some of the parents of the Chibok schoolchildren gave their number as 300 while others said it was more than that. The school authorities initially gave the number of the abducted girls as 50 but later recanted this number and said it was much higher. When *Daily Trust* newspaper (2014) contacted the then Director of Defence Information, Major General Chris Olukolade, he said: "about 129 students in the school at the time of the attack are said to have been abducted" (p. 5). Confirming this, Borno state governor Kashim Shettima (2014) also disclosed at a news briefing that "a total of 129 final-year science students undertaking exams were at the school hostel when the attackers came" (p. 9). Another controversy was the girls' alleged rescue by

the military which was later found to be untrue. In a statement, the then Director of Defence Information Major-General Chris Olukolade (2014) had earlier disclosed that “more students of the Government Girls’ Secondary School (GGSS), Chibok have been freed this evening [...], the Principal of the school has confirmed that only 8 of the students are still missing” (p. 1). In a twist, the school principal, Asabe Kwambura, told *Daily Trust* (2014) that “other than the 14 students who escaped on the night of the attack, no more girls had been found” (p. 1). The military authorities later recanted its claim of rescuing the girls a day later.

On the day the incident occurred, 276 schoolgirls from GGSS Chibok were abducted from their hostel. On 14 April 2014, 57 were able to escape before the Boko Haram members reached their destination. One of the abducted girls was rescued in July 2016. 21 were released in October 2016, one was rescued in November 2016, and 196 schoolgirls are still in captivity. The abduction of the Chibok students has further reinforced the existing deep-rooted suspicions and divisions in Nigeria based on ethno-geographic, political and religious inclinations. Public debates on the abduction centred along these sentiments. Nigerians from the majority Christian south accuse the Muslim north of conspiring with the insurgents to use the story of the abduction to destroy the government of President Goodluck Jonathan. They also alleged that the abduction never occurred. The study period for this abduction is 12- 14 April 2014.

The third key incident is the deployment and use of female suicide bombers by Boko Haram. Boko Haram is not the first terrorist group that has used women as suicide bombers. Bloom (2017) argued that “the face of terrorism is [...] now often a woman’s face. No longer can we expect terrorists to look a certain way, be a certain age, or be male; [...] Women are becoming key players. They can even be found in the most seemingly chauvinistic and male-dominated terrorist organizations” (p. 12). Nielsen (2017) also argued that “the presence of young girls and women in Boko Haram suicide attacks, although rare in conflicts in general, has become a hallmark for the group” (p. 74). According to the Research Institute Stratfor

(2015), Boko Haram is the group that has utilised most women as suicide bombers in history. In addition, the group has relied on coercion to mobilise women for suicide attacks. Woron (2016) argued that “it is not the group’s use of females that is particularly shocking ... but its use of coercion: Historically, suicide bombing has been known to be voluntary” (p. 10). Pearson (2015) also explained that women are not given any public glory when carrying out suicide missions like their male counterparts. Their names are not known neither do they appear in propaganda videos, they are only used as a form of human artillery (Pearson, 2015).

Part of the strategy adopted by the Boko Haram sect is the use of adolescent girls as suicide bombers with some alleged to be as young as 10. The corresponding period and the age of the suicide bombers killed and captured since then have prompted speculation that Boko Haram has enlisted some of the abducted Chibok schoolgirls in its jihad. *Nigeria Tribune* (2015) editorial argued: “the increasing deployment of female suicide bombers, or in some cases male bombers dressed up as women, [underscores] the latest evidence of Boko Haram’s murderous inventiveness and [...] to global terror’s rules of engagement [and] confirms what many observers have always believed about the group’s contempt for the female form, or women as a whole” (p. 2). The deployment of these bombers has led to the loss of lives and properties in Gombe, Kano, Niger, Yobe and Borno states where the attacks happened. Another feature of these bombings was the use of ‘hijab’ by male suicide bombers which was unpacked and contextualised by this study. The hijab is a gown worn by mostly Muslim women which completely covers the wearers from head to toes.

The success of the use of women as suicide bombers by the group might be connected to the anonymity the ‘hijab’ offers the wearers. Also, because of the culture and religious values of Nigeria, security agents on ‘stop and search’ operations do not search a woman wearing the hijab. This problem is compounded by the inadequate number of female security agents to conduct such exercises. The female suicide bombers take advantage of this to slip through the

porous security roadblocks mounted. Onuoha and George (2015) conducted a study on Boko Haram's use of female suicide bombers in Nigeria and found that 2014-2015 recorded a conservative fatality rate of 73 people including the female suicide bombers with worst fatalities recorded in Borno state. The study period for this incident covers 26 July-2 August 2014.

The final key event is the rescue of hundreds of women and children abducted by Boko Haram in Sambisa Forest of Borno state by the Nigerian Military. Sambisa forest is known as the main hideout of the sect and headquarters. Most of those rescued were women and girls with some younger than 18 years of age. Some of the girls were initially thought to be among the 276 Chibok schoolgirls that were abducted from their school in April 2014, but statements released by the Defence Headquarters and the Nigerian Army said they were not. Details of their identities, health status or actual location remained shrouded in mystery. Investigations carried out by *Weekly Trust*, a weekend edition of *Daily Trust* newspaper discovered that while many girls and women were forcefully taken to Sambisa Forest, hundreds of others went on their own volition. The study period for the final key event is 29/04/-06/05/2015.

News commentaries, hard news, feature articles, opinion pieces, editorials, news analysis and letters to the editor that mention Boko Haram's attacks and women in the six selected newspapers were selected and coded based on the patterns of frames used. With this, data harvested from these national dailies are representative of the sample population of newspapers in the country. Again, because different newspapers with different house styles, publishers, editorial policies coupled with political, ethnic and religious biases were examined and analysed, this work has attempted to look out for possible reasons for variation across these sources (e.g. time, type of newspapers, editorial policies, geographical location and political biases). This has made the research more detailed and accurate about key incidents in the

history of the conflict and its impact on women, on the one hand, and how the news media have represented women, on the other.

### **INTERCODER RELIABILITY**

A coder was briefly trained to find out whether there are any agreements in the coding. Cohen's kappa test of intercoder reliability was run using SPSS Statistics to find out if there was agreement between this researcher and the coder. The Kappa statistic varies from 0 to 1, where larger values indicate better reliability (Altman, 1999; McHugh, 2012). This thesis established intercoder reliability separately for each category by randomly selecting 10% of the 404 articles analysed. A total of 44 articles were coded for this purpose. A kappa (k) of .468 was recorded which represents a moderate strength of agreement (Altman, 1999; and McHugh, 2012). There was therefore moderate agreement between this researcher and the coder. The major disagreements were found in the following frames: terrorism for the sake of love; tough as male; out of touch with reality; physical appearance; and attribution of responsibility.

### **DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS.**

Simple frequency tables were used to present data gathered for the study. The research questions were tested using the Chi-Square Test of Independence at the 5% level of significance (i.e.  $\alpha=0.05$ ). The use of chi-square test implies that, this study has not only used frequency tables but have also conducted cross-tabulations which is the most reliable and convenient test instrument to measure whether there is a relationship between two or more variables or not (Wilmer & Dominick, 2003). These tests were carried out using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 23.0, IBM Corporation, 2015) software to create the frequency distribution tables, cross tabulation tables, and test for the Chi-square result.



## LIMITATIONS

An academic study in a conflict zone like Borno state presents obvious challenges. One of the major limitations in this study is that because of the nature of this conflict, virtually everything about the Boko Haram sect is contested. Data and narratives from affected areas are often fragmented, politicised, some unreliable, contradictory and difficult to substantiate, and are often uncritically reproduced in both media and scholarly literature (Nielsen, 2017). Nielsen (2017) argues that “In Nigeria, where conflict, underdevelopment and violence are already a reality in a state, whose very foundation and politics are highly contested, conspiracies are not simply to be dismissed but often happen to be founded in both half and whole truths” (p. 1). Consequently, this research relied on secondary data, such as published articles and media sources, due to the difficulty of obtaining primary data. In view of this limitation, this work carried out a comprehensive literature review of relevant literature by media scholars and social scientists. Similarly, some video materials released by the Boko Haram sect; newspaper articles; and write-ups were examined, compared and the important information relevant to this work used.

Conducting interviews with some of the respondents was also very difficult. Due to ethical considerations, the researcher could not travel to the war zone and had to conduct the interviews by phone or send questionnaires by email to respondents which consumed a lot of time. 40 respondents were contacted on phone and details of the questionnaire sent to them; ample time was used to explain the purpose of the study and enough time was given for these respondents to answer the questionnaire but only 19 responded and returned the questionnaire while 1 agreed to a face-to-face interview in Abuja. Related to this is the absence of female voices in the interviews. An important limitation of this study is the gender bias evident in the sample of the questionnaires returned with none from female journalists. Out of the 40 questionnaires distributed to journalists irrespective of gender with ample time given within

which to return them, female journalists did not respond. The researcher also sent reminders through email, texts and WhatsApp messages alongside phone calls to the journalists, but only male journalists responded and returned the questionnaires. When prodded further, most of the female journalists hinged their refusal to participate in the research to the fact that their male journalists are better equipped to answer the questionnaires as they are the ones assigned to cover the conflict in their respective organizations. Others attributed their refusal to security concerns despite the assurance of anonymity promised in the consent form. The poor response rate might be due to the religious, traditional and cultural factors which are the hallmarks of a patriarchal society like North east region of Nigeria where most women despite their educational attainment still feel stifled or intimidated by their male counterparts. While this research had to be conducted without the voice of female journalists due to time constraints, their inclusion in larger samples remains an important task for future research.

The data collection was carried out at the Nigerian National Library, Abuja. Accessing hard copies of the newspapers selected for this study was difficult. Another challenge was the inability to get complete pages of some of the newspapers selected for the period under review as some of the pages were missing. There were other practical constraints such as time, costs, and limited literature on news media representations of women in conflict. Future studies could include additional newspapers that are representative of more ethnic groupings and geographical spread in Nigeria. These practical constraints have also limited the sample size to only six newspapers and to only journalists covering the conflict in Borno state due to limited funding, logistics support and time constraints.

## **ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

This thesis adhered to all ethical issues as enunciated in the University of Chester's Code of Ethics and social science inquiry of this nature. Reinard (2001) argued that "research is judged not by the rigor of procedures and the results obtained but by the ethics of the researchers" (p.

14). To maintain the integrity of this research, basic ethical issues considered include evaluation of the potential benefits to the participants and society, conduct of work and findings in an objective, and competent manner; and obtaining an informed consent from respondents. Permission was also sought from relevant authorities to use official data. Researcher's identity was fully disclosed in the consent form including contact details. Permission was also given to the participants to terminate their involvement at any time. Promises were given to protect and respect the rights, dignity, confidentiality, and privacy of each participant. Bryman (2016) argued that the researcher should not allow harm to befall the participant and the researcher during field work while independence of research will be clearly set out. This researcher put every mechanism in place to ensure that participants and the researcher were not in any harm's way. To avoid exposing the researcher to any danger, the interview was conducted in Abuja, the federal capital territory of Nigeria. Questionnaires were sent by post and emailed to participants. Data collection of newspapers was similarly carried out in the National library Abuja - far from the conflict zone.

The project received ethical approval from the Faculty of Arts and Media Ethics Committee of the University of Chester on 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2015. Participants were thoroughly briefed about the research; a consent form was prepared, and two copies of the form were sent to each participant with clear instructions that a signed copy should be returned to the researcher. Verbal and written consent from participants was obtained before interviews were conducted and questionnaires despatched.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **PATRIARCHY AND GENDER STEREOTYPES**

Patriarchy and gender stereotypes are the major themes identified in this study which will be examined in Part IV titled: Results and Discussions of this thesis. Patriarchy and gender stereotypes are the first of the three chapters on findings in this research. The first part of this chapter examines some of the articles in the selected newspapers that demonstrated patriarchal sentiments and gender stereotypes in their representations of women in the Boko Haram conflict. Some of the answers from the semi-structured interviews conducted with journalists that best reflect these sentiments are also examined with some scholarly works from the literature reviewed used as building blocks. This chapter is divided into three major sections which include: results, discussions, and conclusion.

#### **RESULTS:**

The dominant frames that best describe patriarchal sentiments and gender stereotypes in news media representations of women in the Boko Haram conflict were: patriarchy, gender, powerless/helpless, human/strategic interest, and label as shown in Tables 5:1, 5:2; and 5:3. Patriarchy refers to respect for men as the final authority over the family and other structures in society; gendered frame refers to the female gender; Powerless/helpless describes the lack of capacity to act; strategic/human interest frame describes whether the articles were of strategic editorial importance and of particular human interest to the public; and the label frame reflects the restrictive and stereotypical representation of women in a reductive manner, often classifying them into a category of subordination (Oxford English Dictionary Online, 2018; Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English Online, 2018). Patriarchal sentiments and gender stereotypes dominated media narratives about the Boko Haram conflict and women within the period under review.

**TABLE 5:1**

<b>FRAMES</b>	<b>FREQUENCY OF APPEARANCE</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Attribution of responsibility</b>	391	96.8%
<b>Gendered</b>	356	88.1%
<b>Strategic/human interest</b>	351	86.9%
<b>Patriarchy</b>	327	80.9%
<b>Powerless/helpless</b>	298	73.8%
<b>Label</b>	171	42.3%

### **MAIN FRAMES IDENTIFIED IN THE STUDY**

The gendered frame recorded an overall frequency of 356 representing 88.1% as shown in Table 5:2.

**TABLE 5.2**

<b>NAME</b>	<b>FREQUENCY</b>	<b>%</b>
<i>Daily Trust</i>	84	82.4
<i>Leadership</i>	81	90.0
<i>Nation</i>	54	85.7
<i>ThisDay</i>	54	98.2
<i>Daily Sun</i>	40	81.6
<i>Guardian</i>	43	95.6
<b>Total</b>	356	88.1

### **USE OF THE GENDERED FRAME**

Table 5:3 shows that the six newspapers used the patriarchy frame 327 times representing 80.9%.

**TABLE 5:3**

NAME	FREQUENCY	%
<i>Daily Trust</i>	<b>79</b>	<b>77.5</b>
<i>Leadership</i>	77	85.6
<i>Nation</i>	44	69.8
<i>ThisDay</i>	47	85.5
<i>Daily Sun</i>	40	81.6
<i>Guardian</i>	40	88.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>327</b>	<b>80.9</b>

#### USE OF THE PATRIARCHY FRAME

Table 5:4 shows that the six newspapers used the powerless/helpless frame 298 times representing 73.8%. In this table (5.4) *Daily Sun* newspaper recorded 51.0% while *ThisDay* newspaper recorded 52.7% which are lower compared to the other newspapers. Reasons for the low figure recorded might be connected to the fact that these newspapers are headquartered in the Southern region of Nigeria and therefore reflect regional parallelism (Yusha’u, 2010). A major feature in Southern Nigeria is that women are more enlightened and empowered (Funmilayo Kuti, 1900-1978; Margaret Ekpo, 1914-2006; Dora Akunyili, and Ngozi Okonjo Iweala) compared to Northern Nigeria. Similarly, Amadiume (1987) had highlighted the power women in the South especially in the Igbo dominated Southeast where *Daily Sun* newspaper is located. It is therefore not surprising that these newspapers recorded a lower percentage of the powerless/helpless frame as women are not seen as powerless/helpless in these regions where the newspapers are cited but are viewed as powerful and celebrated.

**TABLE 5:4**

NAME	FREQUENCY	%
<i>Daily Trust</i>	70	68.6
<i>Leadership</i>	73	89.1
<i>Nation</i>	41	65.1
<i>ThisDay</i>	49	52.7
<i>Daily Sun</i>	26	51.0
<i>Guardian</i>	39	86.7
<b>Total</b>	298	73.8

**USE OF THE POWERLESS/HELPLESS FRAME**

Table 5:5 shows that the label frame appeared 171 times in the six newspapers representing 42.3%. The label frame also suggests evidence of gender stereotypes by these newspapers although the frequency and percentage of appearance of this frame is not as significant as the others as shown in Tables 5:1, 5:2, 5:3 and 5:4. The lower frequency and percentage of appearance in the label frame by the six newspapers might be related to the use of certain permissible vocabularies to describe women in the South compared to the North which again reflects regionalism. This is because when examined closely, newspapers in the South (*ThisDay*, *Daily Sun* and *Guardian*) recorded a higher percentage of the appearance of the label frame than newspapers in the North (*Daily Trust* and *Leadership*).

**TABLE 5:5**

NAME	FREQUENCY	%
<i>Daily Trust</i>	<b>36</b>	<b>35.3</b>
<i>Leadership</i>	36	40.0

<i>Nation</i>	21	33.3
<i>ThisDay</i>	29	52.7
<i>Daily Sun</i>	25	51.0
<i>Guardian</i>	24	53.3
<b>Total</b>	171	42.3

## USE OF THE LABEL FRAME

A chi-square test to measure relationships between patriarchy, gendered, and powerless/helpless frames and the newspapers recorded  $p \text{ value} = .000 < 0.05$ . This indicates that there is statistical significance and a relationship between these variables and the six newspapers. When considered separately, all the six newspapers recorded a higher frequency and percentage of patriarchy and its derivatives, gendered, and powerless/helpless frames as shown in Tables 5:1, 5:2, 5:3, which demonstrates that Nigerian news media represent women in the Boko Haram conflict using patriarchal phrases and gender stereotypes.

Findings from this study also confirm the unequal status and discriminated position of the woman caught up in the Boko Haram conflict. News stories and images of women in the conflict by the Nigerian news media centre on their domesticity and sexuality, their helplessness and depravity, without a voice and the agency to speak and articulate their experiences in the conflict. For example, the *Guardian* newspaper edition of 09/08/2014, captioned “Menace of female suicide bombers”, described the helpless situation of the abducted Chibok girls and the possibility that they might be part of the suicide bombers forced into the acts. This analysis represents the abducted girls as helpless and powerless. Similarly, a story that appeared in *Daily Trust* newspaper of 10/02/2013 about Boko Haram’s brutal murder of 9 female polio workers represented the survivors of the attack as voiceless who cannot speak for themselves but can only be heard through their male family members as the news media only interviewed these men about the incident. Again, Table 5:1, shows that the



powerless/helpless frame appeared 298 times which represents 73.8% of the 404 articles analysed. Results were examined under these key incidents: Threats by Boko Haram leader, Abubakar Shekau (30/09/2012) and the first major attack on women in Kano State, North central Nigeria (09/02/2013); abduction of female students of Government Girls Secondary School, Chibok in Borno state, North east Nigeria (14/04/2014); use of women as female suicide bombers (28/07/2014); and rescue of women hostages captured by the terrorists (02/05/2015).

### **THREATS BY BOKO HARAM LEADER (30/09/2012) AND FIRST MAJOR ATTACK ON WOMEN (09/02/2013)**

The first key event selected for this study was the threat the Boko Haram leader Abubakar Shekau issued to the Nigerian government that the sect will attack wives of government officials in retaliation for the detention of the wives of its members. The nine-minute threat was posted on *YouTube* on 30/09/2012 and was titled: '*Sako Zuwa Ga Duniya*' in Hausa (A Message to the World). This threat appeared on the pages of some Nigerian newspapers on 02/10/2012. This was not the first time Boko Haram had issued such a threat. The first recorded threat was a 2012 video by Boko Haram leader Abubakar Shekau, titled: '*Imam Abubakar Shekau's message to President Jonathan 2*'. In this video, the Boko Haram leader threatened to kidnap the wives and children of government officials if the government did not stop its attacks on the wives of the terrorists. This threat did not receive any mention from Nigerian newspapers. The second threat was selected for this study because it received mention from some Nigerian newspapers and shortly after this threat, Boko Haram carried out one of its first major attacks against women when it brutally murdered nine female polio workers in Kano state, North Central Nigeria in 09/02/2003.

*The Daily Trust* newspaper edition of 02/10/2012 carried a news story about the second threat issued by the leader of the sect which reads:

A *YouTube* video clip released by the Boko Haram sect [which] spotted Abubakar Shekau, the leader of the sect threatening violent attacks against government establishments and their families was released by the sect; [...] Shekau alleged that his members were being extra judicially killed while sect members' wives were being maltreated while in custody. In the message, which was broadcast in Hausa, Shekau threatened to go after wives of government officials in retaliation.

Other newspapers also picked up the story about the threat. The *Daily Sun* of 28/10/2012 carried a bold headline spread across its cover page captioned: '*We will kill your Wives*'. The *Nation* newspaper of 2/10/2012 also covered the threat in one of its headlines captioned: '*Threat to attack wives of government officials*'. One of the implications of this threat is that when you attack women, you hit at the very heart of the pride of men. These headlines and articles indicate that the sect has realised the significance of using women as instruments of war.

Some of the newspapers had earlier carried reports of raids and arrests of wives, relatives and children of alleged members of the Boko Haram sect by security operatives in a bid to flush out the terrorists from their hiding places. Some of these newspaper reports also demonstrate patriarchal sentiments. For instance, *Daily Trust* newspaper of 01/10/2012 carried a report about a raid on the house of a suspected Boko Haram member and some of the sentences used in that report reflected the powerless state of the wife of the suspect: "The wife of the prime suspect, who was killed, told us that [...] her husband told her parents that he was going to enrol her in a school here in Zaria. However, one day, according to her, she saw a gun in his room and when she showed concern; he convinced her that it was meant for self-defence". She could neither question nor insist on answers from her husband. Submissiveness and obedience to the decisions taken by men in a society like North east Nigeria is often demanded and expected from women, a major characteristic of a patriarchal society. Koziel

(2014) argued that “in this society women are subjected not only to physical, but also sociocultural conditions that constitute their status of discriminated social groups; [...] in many cases girls are regarded as only ‘future housewives’ and continue to be the caregivers of the family” (p. 219).

In the wake of the brutal murder of nine female immunization workers by the Boko Haram sect during an immunization exercise in Kano state, North central Nigeria, the six newspapers analysed also demonstrated patriarchal sentiments and gender stereotypes in their representation of the incident. *Sunday Trust*, which is the Sunday edition of *Daily Trust*, represented the women as voiceless and passive victims who cannot speak for themselves but can only be heard through their male family members:

The survivors of last Friday’s attack on polio workers in Kano have recounted and shared their experiences with Sunday Trust. Naja’atu Salisu is the only survivor of the attack at Hotoron Haye in Nasarawa local government area of the State. [...] Describing how he received the news about the attack, Naja’atu’s father, Alhaji Salisu Dakata said, “I was at a filling station around 9am when Naja’atu called me and said they were attacked and that her younger sister Hauwa was already dead. Another survivor, Zahra’u Ayuba, a mother of four also received treatment at the hospital; [...] her husband, Abdulrazak Umar [...] said he received a call from her asking him to forgive her.

Some of the journalists interviewed for this research explained Boko Haram’s instrumental attacks on women within the lens of the sect’s adoption of this strategy as an instrument of exerting collateral damage on the Nigerian state and the terrorists’ understanding of the dynamics of gender warfare. Respondent 3, a 45-year-old Christian news reporter from South West Nigeria with 10 years’ experience working in the conflict zone, argued that “the terrorists were very strategic in their attacks and understand the implications of targeting

women and children; [...] they know that women and children are the heart of the society. Kidnap a woman and you have successfully ruined ten families; kill a woman and you ruin a whole lineage". This response demonstrated that women were targeted to shame and humiliate the government and the men whose women were attacked. Swiss and Giller (1993) argued that "women may be idealized as the bearers of a cultural identity and their bodies perceived as 'territory' to be conquered [while] rape and other forms of violence against women [are used] to increase men's subjugation and humiliation" (p. 613). The attacks on women may perhaps be the terrorists' strategy of spreading terror and fear among men and to shame them as they were expected to protect their women, a characteristic of a patriarchal society. Therefore, when Boko Haram targeted women, it hit at the very essence of the man's pride and psyche.

Respondent 11 - a 40-year-old Muslim indigene of Borno state with 5 years' experience reporting the conflict explained why more emphasis is given to male victims of the attacks than female victims: "Our newspapers give legitimacy to the status quo as women are viewed as an extension of the husband who presumably is the head of the home". Respondent 3 also explained that "it is all about the men, because it is believed that what affects the man affects the woman [and] society frowns at women that are too outspoken; stories are often slanted to favour men and the men have more say than the woman in any news bulletin". Corroborating this, respondent 6, a 65-year-old Christian news reporter from North East Nigeria who has worked as a journalist for over 30 years and covered the Boko Haram conflict since it started, argued that "If you look at the coverage so far, women have not been given fair hearing and a voice to articulate their feelings on how the conflict is impacting them". However, some respondents were unapologetic about giving more emphasis to attacks on men than women. For instance, Respondent 13, a 50-year-old Christian news editor from South Nigeria who has been an editor for 10 years, argued that "It is felt and I think rightly so that the impact of the

conflict on men should be highlighted more than its impact on women because men are the heads of the family and anything that affects the head affects the body”.

When journalists were asked to give reasons for their lack of interest in writing stories about women in the Boko Haram conflict as demonstrated in findings from the data analysed, 14 journalists representing 70% of those interviewed blamed patriarchy for the lack of interest about the plight of women in the conflict. Respondent 16, a news editor with 10 years working experience from South West Nigeria, argued that “Nigeria is male dominant world and so issues that affect women are seen to be not as important as those affecting men [and] despite the breakthroughs by women especially educationally, we still give prominence to men in our reports”. The above responses suggest that the woman in a patriarchal society like North East Nigeria is placed in a disadvantaged position of subordination to the man.

#### **ABDUCTION OF FEMALE STUDENTS OF GOVERNMENT GIRLS SECONDARY SCHOOL, CHIBOK- 14/04/2014**

The Boko Haram sect understands the importance of using abductions and kidnappings as one of its strategies of exerting collateral damage in its campaigns of mayhem in the North East region of Nigeria. The Euro Mediterranean Human Rights Network (EMHRN, 2013) report on the Syrian conflict revealed that “the kidnapping of women has also become a strategy of exchanging prisoners and exacting revenge” (p. 1). Boko Haram has also used this tactic several times to negotiate for the release of its captured members in exchange for women abductees and other hostages (*Punch* 09/05/2014; *Premium Times* 01/05/2014; *Nation* 07/05/2017; and *Daily Sun* 08/05/2017). Although there have been undocumented rumours of abductions carried out by the sect in the past, one of the first official reports of these abductions was Boko Haram’s attacks on the Dikwa community in Borno state which appeared in the *Daily Trust* newspaper’s edition of 12/04/2014: “In Dikwa, [...] the insurgents stormed

a college [...], killed six teachers, two security men and took away some young women whose number is not immediately clear”.

One of the major attacks by Boko Haram was the abduction of 276 female students of Government Girls Secondary school, Chibok in Borno state North East Nigeria on 14/04/2014. Articles analysed about the abduction of the 276 Chibok schoolgirls demonstrated that news media narratives were saturated with patriarchal sentiments and gender stereotypes. One of the news stories in *Daily Trust* newspaper bulletin of 16/04/2014 described a father’s reaction to the abduction of his daughter: “I can’t quantify what I am feeling now! Worse still, my mind would have been more comfortable if I had seen the body of my daughter.” A *Daily Trust* newspaper article of 18/04/2014 reported similar reactions by another father: “The very thought of the girls in the hands of men makes one cringe. What is their fate, what are they going to do to them, how afraid the girls would be, thinking about their parents, are questions that nag the mind and refuse to go away”? These articles show the frustrations of the fathers’ inability to rescue their daughters. The *Nation* newspaper’s edition of 18/04/2014 quoted a serving Senator’s reaction to the abduction: “The dream of these girls shouldn’t be thwarted by the Boko Haram; [...] this is not a time for blame game on any side but the whole nation should rise as one to ensure that the other girls in the custody of this sect are released and re-united with their parents.” A paragraph in a news analysis that appeared in *Daily Trust* (18/04/2014) echoed this position:

One hundred daughters of Nigeria in the arms and laps of godless men. Our children in the coven of men with dark hearts, glazed eyes [...] are they being molested as I write this? Are they being made to do unspeakable things? Are they being.....? Dear Lord, let not what has been playing in my head for days be true.

In a patriarchal society like Nigeria, the woman is often viewed as the ‘weaker sex’. The news media in such a setting often give salience to such perceptions by using stereotypical

phrases and words that portray women as this 'weaker sex' in their news narratives. Similarly, the frequency of appearance of the powerless/helpless frame as shown in Table 5:2 demonstrated that the majority of the 404 articles analyzed represented women as voiceless and powerless victims of the conflict. Furthermore, a paragraph which quoted one of the fathers of the abducted girls in an article of *Leadership* news edition of 18/04/2014 underlies the patriarchal sentiments attached to women who engage in very physical activities despite the circumstances or the danger they are faced with: "The reality that the young girls JUMPED out of a vehicle, RAN into the BUSH, SPENT the NIGHT in the bush, underlines the gravity of the situation to make teenage girls to behave like that, in order to escape".

In a traditional patriarchal society, the woman is identified with domesticity, childbearing and rearing with character traits of being passive and gentle. The man, on the other hand, is seen as the go getter, aggressive, forceful and the stronger of the two (Millet, 2003; Ajayi, 2007; Para Mallam, 2010; and Kozeil, 2014). Therefore, the action some of the abducted girls took in order to escape by jumping off a mobile vehicle was an unheard-of action from such young girls. One of the fathers of the abducted girls expressed shock over the drastic measures these girls were forced to take to escape. The editors of *Leadership* newspaper were also possibly shocked at this action, which might explain why the reaction of one of the abducted girl's father was quoted at length (*Leadership*, 18/04/2014).

Such an action by young girls might be celebrated in some developed societies like Britain and the United States of America. On the contrary, in an African setting, such a daring escape by girls from their abductors is often considered out of place. The father's reaction to this escape as represented in the article suggested that for women seen as the 'weaker sex' to be pushed into taking such a desperate and drastic action is an aberration. Sjoberg and Gentry (2011) argued that "most notions of what it means to be a woman emphasize passiveness, peacefulness, mothering, and interdependence" (p. 3). Respondent 5, a 35-year-old Muslim

news reporter from North Central Nigeria who has reported the conflict for five years, explained that news media reports reflect the cultural and religious norms of society and argued that “because Nigeria is a male dominant society, the news media recognises and goes along with this tradition so as not to turn the apple cart”. This action by the girls can be contextualised within the broader meaning of trying to break from the status quo of passivity and interdependence in which women are cast by the society and the news media in Nigeria.

### **FEMALE SUICIDE BOMBING -28/07/2014**

When the Boko Haram sect began the instrumental use of women as suicide bombers in its violent campaigns, the newspapers analysed portrayed these women as victims and passive participants in the conflict. In one of its articles on the use of women as suicide bombers, *Leadership* (30/07/2014) described women suspected to be would-be suicide bombers as: “female strangers in hijab; [...] ladies might have bombs concealed under their hijabs”. Also, *Leadership* newspaper edition of 31/07/2014 splashed a headline across its cover page captioned: ‘*Another teen female bomber*’, while part of the article reads: “the female would-be bombers were enticed with male suitors”. The use of the phrase ‘female would-be bombers were enticed with male suitors’ demonstrated that women in the conflict were represented by the news media as only good for marriage using the frames of suicide bombers ‘for the sake of love’, and ‘out of touch with reality’ which suggested passive perpetrators without a mind of their own who are out of touch with reality and can only carry out such violent acts because of love or because of the desire to be married. Patriarchy says to the woman especially in the African society that she can only be good enough if she gets a husband; the only way a woman can be protected is through a man who symbolises the patriarchal figure. And because of this she is willing to sacrifice her life - by paying the ‘ultimate sacrifice’ for the ‘sake of love’. The use of the gendered and label frames in these articles represented women as passive actors in



the conflict while portraying them as women without a mind of their own reflecting elements of patriarchy which robs women of the voice and the public space to articulate themselves.

The article by *Daily Sun* newspaper of 29/07/2014 similarly highlighted this stereotype: “Eyewitnesses said an innocent looking female bomber, pretending to be a kerosene customer, found her way into the station, while concealing an IED inside her hijab”; [...] “using women as suicide bombers is inhuman and callous”. This article represented the female suicide bomber as a passive victim who perpetrated a heinous crime that led to the loss of many lives. Again, an article in *Daily Sun* newspaper’s edition of 30/07/2014 stated: “Is it possible that some of those young girls may have been brainwashed (or intimidated) into taking up suicide bombing for Boko Haram”? Patriarchy represents the woman as voiceless and passive. A media commentator and analyst who has lived and worked in the conflict region since it started, Gujbawu (2016), explained:

Media portrayed women as the victims always, weaker sex and helpless, even when there were reports on women volunteers to fight the insurgents, women suicide bombers, women insurgents, women transporting arms for the insurgents; [...], it is lopsided to portray them as weak and the victims when in some cases they were the actors. Media overlooked the effort of the women in the fight against insurgency, deadly acts of women sympathizers and supporters of the insurgents; women masterminds were not properly reported; [...] this is the usual portrayal linked to colonial and patriarchal perspectives.

The news media representations of women in the conflict also reflected the demonization of the veil (hijab). In most of the news media reports about the use of female suicide bombers by the Boko Haram sect, the veil was represented as a symbol to escape detection and to attack soft targets. A sentence that best explained this demonization was captured in one of the feature articles on the use of female suicide bombers and its implications

that appeared on a back page commentary in the *Daily Sun* (31/07/2014), which stated: “residents avoid direct or close contacts with young girls wearing veils even as checks have also shown that the mode of dressing in a long veil is no longer fashionable given the suspicion it evokes from the public and security agencies”. A veil or hijab is a piece of clothing worn by some Muslim women which usually covers the head and the body, and serves as a symbol of modesty, chastity and privacy. Kozieł (2014) argued that “for most [...] Muslim feminists, the hijab symbolizes a persistence of pursuing the right to be active in the public space (p. 223). Mahdi (2009) also argued that “[it’s] a way to participate in political processes and avoid the seclusion even if partially” (p. 10). Zakaria (2001) similarly argued that “for [women] following the rules and wearing the veil have become symbols of Islamic identity, a sign of protection and respect rather than of oppression; [...] female seclusion and the wearing of the veil are proofs of the acceptance and practice of Islamic norms and values” (p. 110). Mahdi (2009) interrogates this notion and argued that “for other Muslim women, wearing the veil is a means of oppression, an indication of men’s determination to isolate them from public life” (p. 10). Whether for religious, social, cultural or political reasons, the veil which symbolises Islamic identity among female adherents remains a symbol of vilifying and stereotyping Muslim women by a segment of the Nigerian society and the news media. Also, an article published by the, *Daily Trust* (01/08/2014) quoted one of its male sources in its report on why female suicide bombers were escaping detection:

He said the rules of engagement do not allow male security operatives to search women, but now that the insurgents have device (sic) a new means, more female security personnel will be engaged; [...] Following the recent dimension adopted by the Boko Haram of using female suicide bombers, the Federal Government has announced that there will be deployment of more female security operatives to check women.

The conflict zone is in North East Nigeria, populated predominantly by Muslims. This is a highly conservative society steeped in Islamic tradition and culture. The wearing of a hijab by women especially Muslims is seen as a religious obligation. But with the spate of female suicide bombings, the hijab represents an attire worn to escape detection and as a result, young women wearing hijab are viewed with suspicion and sometimes ridiculed by the public. The articles cited suggested that even the news media represented women as possible would-be bombers based on what they wear and how they appear. These representations by the newspapers highlighted the disadvantaged position of every woman wearing a hijab in fulfilment of a religious obligation as she remains a suspect until proven innocent by security operatives. The mere thought of a man searching the woman is an abomination and highly offensive to the sensibilities of such a patriarchal society. The downside to this is that in some sections of the Nigerian society and the news media women wearing the veil are viewed as a homogenous entity and denigrated increasing their discriminated status in the society and the media. These examples clearly demonstrated the intersectionality of patriarchy with identities of gender, sex, and religious oppression and in this case Islam alongside other forms of institutional discrimination from the Nigerian security forces (Crenshaw, 1989; Spelman, 1990; Kangas et al., 2014; and Sharpes, 2018). This invariably means that Muslim women who use the ‘hijab’ are not only treated unequally because of their gender but are often oppressed, denigrated and stigmatised by the security forces and the society as potential suicide bombers because of the veils they wear as a form of religious covering. Women in the conflict region of the Northeast therefore experience the intersectionality of patriarchal discrimination and Islamic oppression.

Again, *Leadership* news bulletin of 28/07/2014 carried a news story about the arrest of an alleged male bomber dressed as a woman. This incident happened when the motorcade conveying the then opposition candidate of the All Progressive Congress (APC) - General

Mohammed Buhari (Nigeria's current President) - was travelling along the streets of Kaduna in North Central Nigeria and was hit by a bomb. The article in the newspaper represented the wearing of a female apparel by a man as an abomination to society. A paragraph in the news report read:

The suspect's mother said the military mistook her son for a terrorist because he was found wearing female clothes. She said her son was under demonic attack which made him to act strangely and become fond of women clothes; [...] he often dresses normal from home, but whenever he gets to an uncompleted building, he would go in and change to the female clothes; [...] my son is not a terrorist. What is wrong with him is an evil spiritual attack which is making him to prefer women's clothing and to act as one who is mentally retarded.

The wearing of a female attire by a man in Nigeria, especially in the Muslim North, portrays transgender traits and is frowned upon by society. Newspapers also reflected this by representing the act as an abomination and a deviant behaviour. This response highlighted the fact that socio-cultural and religious inhibitions are reflected in news media representations of issues in Northern Nigeria.

## **RESCUE OF WOMEN HOSTAGES**

The news media representations of the rescue of hundreds of women abducted by the Boko Haram sect similarly demonstrated gender stereotypes and patriarchal sentiments. The representation of women affected by the conflict as voiceless and passive victims was demonstrated in a news story that appeared on the cover page of the *Daily Trust* on 02/05/2015: 'Confusion over identities of rescued Sambisa women' with a sub-heading titled: 'Many stories of abductions remain untold':

“There is confusion, especially in Maiduguri Township, as well as various camps where Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) are living, over the real identity of the rescued women and children from now infamous (SAMBISA FOREST). There was jubilation within the week over the recovery of hundreds of women, girls and children from various Boko Haram camps at the Sambisa Forest. [...] But the identity of the rescued abductees is shrouded in secrecy; [...] details of their identities, health status or actual location remain shrouded in mystery; [...] there is outrage over scarcity of information regarding the rescued women. Hundreds of people, including women and children have been abducted in various towns and villages in Borno State over the years, but their stories remain untold. In December 2014, about 185 women and children were forcefully taken away by the insurgents in Gumsuri village in Damboa LGA. Defence Headquarters gave little attention, as did the media”.

Information remained scanty about these women apart from the official accounts from the military and government officials. There was great uncertainty about these women’s identities as the military authorities and the Nigerian government did not allow them to speak. As a result, their identity was shrouded in secrecy. One of the persons that did a follow up commentary after this article asks rhetorically, “Can the girls not talk and give their own identities”? This story again highlighted women’s inability to speak even on issues that directly affect them. A study carried out by Alawemo and Muterera (2013) also observed that during the 2010 crisis in Jos, Central Nigeria, women and girls suffered the worst form of sexual abuse. Their captors repeatedly raped them for three months. The study also found that after their rescue, five out of the twenty were pregnant and tested positive to HIV/AIDS test while their community later ostracized some of them. This work (Alawemo & Muterera 2013) suggested that women victims of conflicts in a traditional African society like Nigeria tend to be afraid of narrating their ordeal due to the stigmatization that will follow such revelations. They are

also afraid of the consequences that might follow such disclosures as it is an abomination to be associated with a woman believed to have been raped.

Another incident that reflected the absence of platforms for women victims of the Boko Haram conflict to narrate their experiences involved the rescue of an abducted Chibok schoolgirl by the Nigerian army in April 2016. Her views were only heard through her uncle and the Borno state governor Kashim Shettima when she was presented to the Nigerian President General Mohammed Buhari. To date, nothing has been heard about her experiences in the hands of the sect. Initially, the assumption was that the rescued girl might be too traumatised to speak, or the government was protecting her identity. But this was not the case as her image clutching her baby was splashed on the pages of Nigerian newspapers the next day. The most disturbing aspect in these pictures was the fact that she was surrounded by male relatives, male government officials and male security men. Where were the women!? Women in this conflict therefore remained silenced by society and the news media. An article which appeared in *the Daily Trust* (01/05/2015) captured the passive and voiceless role of women in the Boko Haram conflict. It was about the government's plan to order medical examinations of the rescued girls to "check the status of the girls [...] conduct pregnancy test for them, HIV screening among others." In the Western world, conducting medical examinations is necessary in cases such as rape and other forms of sexual abuse against women, but in an African society such as North East Nigeria, most women or their relatives have often resisted or frowned upon the idea of any form of physical medical examinations (Partnership for Reviving Routine Immunization in Northern Nigeria; Maternal New-born and Child Health Initiative-PRRINN-MNCH, 2013 report).

Similarly, the label frame was used by the news media to represent some of the women affected by the conflict. Based on definitions offered by The Oxford English Dictionary online (2018) and the Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English online (2018), the use of the

label frame to represent women in the conflict therefore demonstrated how the news media have represented them in an ‘unfair’, ‘inaccurate’ and ‘reductive’ manner. For instance, *Guardian* newspaper’s edition of 31/07/2014 used the label ‘hijab wearing female suicide bomber’ several times in its report on the use of female suicide bombers by the sect. Similarly, the *Nation* newspaper edition of 31/07/2014 described the 10-year-old girl alleged to have detonated a bomb as ‘hijab wearing female bomber’.

Although, very few newspaper reports attempted to draw a connection between female suicide bombers and the abducted school girls, women victims of the conflict have been labelled in newspaper reports as ‘wives of Boko Haram’, ‘rape victims of Boko Haram’, ‘female suicide bombers’, ‘hijab wearing suicide bombers’, ‘Chibok girls’, ‘weaker sex’, ‘sex symbol’, ‘Sambisa women’, ‘female IDPs’, and ‘abducted Chibok school girls’ (*Daily Trust*, 30/04/2015; *ThisDay*, 30/04/2015). Women victims were faced with the horrors of sexual, physical and psychological violence while in captivity (*Daily Trust*, 29/07/2014; *Leadership*, 31/07/2014; *Daily Sun*, 17/04/2014; *Nation*, 30/04/2015; *ThisDay*, 30/04/2015). After their rescue, the victimization and abuse continued with their labelling by the officials and members of the community - a labelling often repeated by journalists covering the Boko Haram conflict. Similarly, the use of these labels and phrases by the news media not only objectified and demonised these women affected, they also classified into restrictive and reductive categories. The use of labelling by the news media to describe female victims of the Boko Haram conflict suggested objectification, victimization and stigmatization of women based on their gender (Zewis, 2014 as cited in Abeer, 2014). The use of labels by the society which is reflected in news media representation of women in the Boko Haram conflict has also confirmed Spivak’s (1988) findings on the subaltern that the woman is doubly silenced by violence outside and within her society and remains confined within patriarchal norms and can therefore not articulate herself.

The interviews conducted with 20 journalists have reinforced key findings in this study that the news media representations of women in the Boko Haram conflict reflected patriarchal norms and gender stereotypes. For instance, one of the questions asked was whether issues affecting women and men have received equal representation in their newspapers? 11 journalists representing 55% of the 20 interviewed said that issues affecting women and men have not received equal representation in their newspapers. Some respondents attributed this to the influence of Nigeria's patriarchal norms and traditions. Respondent 3 argued:

Issues that affect women are of no concern to the reporters because of their psyche not necessarily because you do not want to write the report, but psychologically you have been built to focus more on what is happening to men than women. So, we overlook some of the challenges of women.

Respondent 15, a 55-year-old Christian news editor from South West Nigeria, explained that "the news media in Nigeria have always carried stories that have direct bearing on men than women because of Nigeria's societal values and culture which is patriarchal in nature". Respondent 11, a 35-year-old Muslim news reporter with 5 years working experience from North East Nigeria, argued: "Although the views of women are also heard the scale is always tilted in favour of men so issues that affect men are given more prominence [...] Society is not particularly bothered about women issues like men's issues and Nigeria being a male dominant society recognises this and so the newspapers try to go along with this". Some of the journalists tied their inability to give equal coverage of the attacks to both genders due to the lack of training and skills to do so. Respondent 3 said:

Nigerian journalists do not have the journalistic knowhow on how to cover the conflict while some do not just care. As a result, there is a gap in the reportage of the Boko Haram's attacks with the Nigerian media overlooking a lot of things especially the issue of women and children; [...] Most of the times when press releases and videos were



released by the sect, journalists do not adequately analyse and interpret them the way they ought to. Journalists were only interested in the people and structures destroyed. Nigerian media only concentrated on peripheral things at the expense of in-depth analysis.

Other journalists blamed their news editors for not understanding the underlying forces and dynamics in the Boko Haram conflict. For example, Respondent 1 argued that the editors “lack an understanding of these dynamics and complexities of the conflict. They tell you what to do, they change your introduction and news angle to suit those (editors) at the expense of the actual story”. Journalists interviewed also attributed the underrepresentation of women in the conflict to the lack of technical skills and knowhow about the complexities in gender and conflict coverage. For example, Respondent 3 argued:

We were reporting the insurgency since we had no clue as to what insurgency and terrorism was all about. It was a strange phenomenon to us. We just started reporting with no previous training. What we were only interested in was how many were killed, and the editors always ask us that. Nobody cared to ask about the gender, whether it was a woman or a child. When the insurgents started their attacks, news stories were not about how many women or children were killed, it was about how many people were killed. The abduction of the Chibok girls triggered the interest among journalists. Questions on what they will do to the women started coming up and that was how people started looking at the implications of these attacks on women.

Some journalists however revealed that their newspapers are fair to both genders. For instance, Respondent 1, a 45-year-old news reporter from South West Nigeria who has worked as a journalist for 15 years and covered the conflict when it was at its peak, argued that “stories in my newspaper are first about the people and the need to defend them against the excesses of government officials and not about whether the newsmakers are women or men”. Also,

Respondent 15, a 60-year-old Christian news editor with 5 years' experience as an editor from South East Nigeria, argued that "it is of no importance to write reports based on gender considerations as the society is well represented in his newspaper's daily bulletins". Sharing similar views, Respondent 17, a 45-year-old Muslim news editor with 10 years' experience from Northern Nigeria who has covered the conflict as a news reporter since it began, explained that his newspaper gives equal opportunity to men and women depending on the merit and news value of the event or issue and that stories about women receive more prominence in some cases because of the perceived gender imbalance in Nigerian society. He buttressed his point with the following example: "If a woman is kidnapped, the story will be placed in maybe page three of the paper and if it were a man, it may be placed on page 10". Respondent 4, a 40-year-old news reporter from North Nigeria who began his career as a journalist in the conflict zone and has 10 years of experience, argued that "stories about women are given equal space, mention and representation because of the gender sensitivity of my news medium which considers both genders as deserving equal treatment". Respondent 1 identified news reports, feature articles, news analyses, editorials and news commentaries about the numerous abductions and forced marriages by the Boko Haram sect as examples of some of the incidents his newspaper carried.

Journalists were also asked whether their various editorial policies included women issues. 65% of the journalists interviewed said that their newspapers do not have such policies. From the newspapers selected for this study, the *Daily Trust*, *ThisDay*, and *Guardian* newspapers have editorial policies on women while *Daily Sun*, *Nations* and *Leadership* newspapers do not have an editorial policy on women. When these newspapers' editorial policies were examined for this study, none of them mentioned women in these policies. Similarly, some of the respondents reported that their organizations have editorial policies which revolve round women others argued that this is not enough to give the woman the voice

to articulate her views. For instance, Respondent 1 argued that because “Women and children are highly disadvantaged; my newspaper believes it should be voice to them”. Respondent 2, a 65-year-old Christian news reporter from the Northeast with over 30 years industry experience who has covered the conflict since it started, explained his newspaper’s editorial policies on the rivalries between media organizations in the country. He argued that his newspaper’s editorial policy on women revolves round their “roles in entrepreneurship and other issues that have been neglected by other media houses”.

Other journalists revealed that although their newspapers do not have clear-cut editorial policies on women, they still have specialised pages dedicated to them. For example, Respondent 3 argued that “we have [...] several specialised pages for women issues such as health, fashion, wellbeing etc. again any good story on women is always carried”. Similarly, Respondent 6, a 38-year-old man from North West Nigeria with 12 years’ experience, explained that although his newspaper does not have an editorial policy on women, it gives emphasis to stories about cases of rape and abduction. Respondent 18, a Muslim news reporter from the North with 5 years industry experience, however, argued that “the dedication of special pages to discuss and analyse women issues in relation to the conflict and the prominence given to the abduction of the Chibok school girls should not be used as a yardstick to measure and gauge how the news media represented women in the conflict”. He also explained that news selection should not depend on gender considerations but should be based on how issues affect the public. These responses by journalists confirm results from the data analysed that patriarchal norms and gender stereotypes dominate news media’s representation of women in the Boko Haram conflict within the period under review.

## **DISCUSSIONS**

### **ABSENCE OF FEMALE JOURNALISTS**

A striking feature of the findings about patriarchal and gender stereotypes is the complete absence of the voice of female journalists. Within the period under review and of the six newspapers selected, there were no recorded news reports written by female journalists from the conflict zone of Borno state. Similarly, most of the newspapers selected for this study do not have a women's page and even if they do, issues are often dedicated to domesticity and fashion. These issues often revolve around reproductive rights, fashion and style, family and cooking. Most women pages run at the weekends and are often devoid of hard news and investigative reporting. Unfortunately, as findings in this study have shown, the public was denied and deprived of reportage of the Boko Haram conflict from the female perspective.

Respondent 14, a news editor from East Nigeria, explained that “the absence of the women's voice despite the inroad they have made in the country is because of societal and religious pressures where they are not often expected to be heard”. Because of this, most newspapers in Nigeria do not have a women's page or speciality reporters to cover women issues. Other respondents interviewed also highlight the importance of a women's page to break the underrepresentation of women in the news media and the misrepresentation in media narratives. While some of the journalists interviewed were in support of a women's page, others view the allocation of women's pages in newspapers as of no consequence to the gender debate. Respondent 20, a 45-year-old Christian news editor with 15 years' experience from Middle Belt Nigeria, argued that “the allocation of a women's page in some of the newspapers would have given women the much-needed voice to articulate their views and check the clamour for more women voices in the news media as gender disparity is not only an editorial issue but a national phenomenon”.

Closely tied to this is the refusal by female journalists in the conflict region to answer questions about news media representations in the conflict when contacted for this research. There were 30 correspondents working for newspapers out of which 28 are men within the period under review (2012-2015). Attempts to interview the other 2 women journalists were rebuffed. When prodded further, some of the female journalists who agreed to speak off the record, expressed reservations about participating in the study because they claimed that there were enough male journalists who are more knowledgeable about the Boko Haram conflict since it started in 2002 and have written good reports about it. They also disclosed that it is only their male counterparts that were assigned conflict beats because of the risks and dangers involved and they were, therefore, better equipped to participate in the study. Others also talked about the risk involved in covering the Boko Haram conflict which they felt is better handled by their male counterparts.

Women journalists are more likely to be harmed during conflicts. Abeer (2017) argued that “one of the dilemmas women journalists face while covering conflicts is that their gender differentiates them and causes people to relate to them differently” (p. 5). Former Director-general of UNESCO Irina Bokova (Cited by Ritchin 2013) described violence against female journalists as ‘double attack’. This is because they are targeted as women and as professional journalists. This brings to focus Spivak’s (1988) work on the subaltern who postulated that women are doubly silenced by their families and the society/government, and the woman remains voiceless. Abeer (2017) argued that “Women journalists wage a war on two fronts: the war to survive, and the war against the system. They are under pressure to prove themselves, and [...], may subject themselves to greater danger” (p. 7). This means that women journalists wage war to survive from possible harm and against the system while covering conflicts. This is because they are under pressure to prove themselves and may therefore subject themselves to greater danger.

Despite these dangers, the importance of women journalists covering conflicts cannot be overemphasised. Stories told by women journalists are often important angles to stories that were not always being told before. The change in newsroom culture has led to an increase in the presence of women in the frontline which is changing war storylines (van Zoonen, 2003). The woman is first trusted as a woman and she can see what her male counterparts cannot see (Abeer, 2017) - the salient features in a story, the hidden facts. For by nature, she is compassionate (Millet, 2003; and Novikau, 2017) and looks at news stories from a compassionate angle especially when it comes to disasters or conflicts coverage. However, despite suggestions by some Nigerian feminist writers (Nwagbara, 2009, and Yakubu, 2001, Ajayi, 2007, and Tar Tsaior, 2010) that only women can best tell their stories and represent their experiences as authentically as possible, findings from this study suggested the contrary. The woman's perspective is not part of media narratives about the pains, sufferings and plights of female victims in the conflict. Yakubu (2001) identified "patriarchal religion, cultural traditions and masculinity as the conditioning tools that lock Nigerian feminist writers into a pre-set interpretation of reality and the world" (p. 154). Nigerian female journalists have not been able to break away from such patriarchal and cultural traditions that have hindered the woman. Therefore, the female victim in the Boko Haram conflict remains voiceless and without an agency.

### **SOCIAL, POLITICAL, AND RELIGIOUS IMPLICATIONS**

Findings from this study also demonstrate that the news media representation of women in the Boko Haram conflict has been affected by the social, cultural, religious and geographical context within which they operate (Bourgault, 1995; Obijiofor & Hanutsch, 2011; Mabweazera, 2015). These findings confirmed Yusha'u (2010)'s concept of regional parallelism as reflected in news media practice in Nigeria. Journalists covering the Boko Haram conflict have revealed that these factors have shaped their reportage of the conflict in respect

to women. Confirming this, findings from this study demonstrated that some of the factors identified by Millet (2003) such as biological, socialization, ideological, sociological, educational, religious and physical forces fuel patriarchy and can be located within Nigerian news media representations of women in the Boko Haram conflict.

As reflected in the answers from the interviews conducted, most respondents believed that the absence of or minimal coverage given to Boko Haram's attacks on women is due to the culture of Northern Nigeria that disadvantages women over men. Respondent 3 argued: "it is very difficult to describe the atrocities of rape and other heinous crimes perpetrated against women on the pages of newspapers so as not to offend the sensibilities of the people due to cultural, religious and traditional values of people in the war zone". Respondent 1 also argued that, "A media organization needs to be in tune with its environment or otherwise lose relevance, so ultimately the public decides the fate of the media, while the media is the watchdog of the leadership of the society, the media is equally watched by the public". Similarly, Respondent 17 explained that the newspaper he works for takes cognisance of stories that come from a region based on its culture, religion and environment and carry stories that are relevant to the issues of the day. According to him, "these factors play an important role in our bulletins especially issues to do with religion and politics; [...], for instance, we do not give space for fanatics to cause disharmony and the newspaper does not advertise alcohol; [we therefore] take note of the cultural and religious sensitivity in the environment we operate."

This study also suggests that patriarchal sentiments reinforced by biological factors and socialization right from childhood are frequently used in news media representations of women in the Boko Haram conflict. Boys are classed as having the macho qualities of strength, vigour, courage, self-confidence and the ability to protect girls and his family and to encounter any challenges the world might offer. Respondent 3 argues: "issues that affect women are of no concern to reporters because of our psyche not necessarily because we do not want to write the

report, but psychologically we have been built to focus more on what is happening to men than women. So, we overlook some of the challenges of women". Closely linked to biological factors and socialization are ideological factors, which Millet (2003) argues, reinforce the socialization process in a patriarchal setting such as the one found in Nigeria especially North East Nigeria where the Boko Haram conflict is raging.

According to Millet (2003), men are socialized to have a dominant temperament. Again, some of the respondents in the interviews conducted for this study also voiced similar sentiments. Respondent 1 argued that "The reporter is also a man who is a product of the same society and so what is inbuilt in the reporter also comes out in that report". This provided men with higher social status which in turn leads to them filling social roles in which they can exercise mastery over women. Respondent 3 explained that because the Nigerian society is 'man's world', women are always treated as secondary and the whole family is covered once it focuses on the man. Opposing this view, Respondent 13, a news reporter from North East Nigeria with 10 years industry experience, justified the emphasis on the male gender in his reportage of the Boko Haram's conflict and argued that "We discovered society is more interested in issues that affects men than women and because we are part of this male dominant society, we always reflect this in our reports".

Educational factors reinforced by economic dependency have also fuelled patriarchy and handicapped women (Millet, 2005). The Boko Haram sect had attributed some of its reasons for kidnapping the school's girls to the belief that the place of a woman is not in education but in the kitchen. For example, in 2014, a video was released by the Boko Haram leader Abubakar Shekau which claimed responsibility for the kidnappings. A *BBC* news report of 05/05/2014 quoted Shekau as claiming that "Allah instructed me to sell them...I will carry out his instructions." The report also stated that the Boko Haram leader said that the girls should not have been in school and instead should have been married since girls as young as nine are



suitable for marriage. In another attack against Federal Government College Buni Yadi, Yobe state in North East Nigeria in 2014, Boko Haram advised the female students to go back home and get married while the male students were murdered. Contrary to the notion that Islam discriminates against women with regards to education, Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said in his hadith: “Acquisition of knowledge is binding on all Muslims (both men and women without any discrimination)” (Ibn-Maja). The education of girls is often considered irrelevant with most of them forced into early marriages to elderly men for financial or social benefits to their parents (Pereira, 2005; Mahdi, 2006; and Koziel, 2014).

Patriarchy also uses physical force to disadvantage and dominate women (Millet, 1971). Zeleza (2008) argues that “wars also engender patriarchal practices where women play largely subordinate roles like their domestic roles, alongside coping with sexual violence and harassment, as well as in post war realities in which women’s issues are often silenced and marginalized” (p. 21). Boko Haram’s campaigns of violence against women can be located within these narratives which invariably engenders patriarchy. Women have not only suffered from the effects of the conflict but have also played subordinate roles like domestic helps and sex slaves to both the terrorists and security forces. Violence against women remains all-pervasive defying class, social status, age, and sexual orientation. In a feature article about the rescue of some of the women abducted by the Boko Haram sect, Idris (*Daily Trust*, 18 July 2015) captures the extent of the atrocities committed by the sect against women:

Truly, several women that managed to escape or were rescued by soldiers from sacked Boko Haram camps told stories of being held as sex slaves against their will. They said they cooked the insurgents’ food, did other menial duties for them and were also sexually abused in the name of being ‘married’ to the insurgents.

Goldstein (2001) argues that, “gender shapes war and war shapes gender” (p. 1). Findings from this study suggest that the news media are complicit in reinforcing patriarchal

practices and gender stereotypes in conflicts. Despite its power and reach, rarely does media coverage of war include the experiences and perspectives of women beyond stereotyped images of women as passive victims and refugees. Del Zotto (2002) conducted a contextual and visual analysis of media coverage of the war in Kosovo (1998) in 21 nations and finds “a significant level of ‘black-out’ of women’s experiences and activism in the conflict” (p. 438). A total of 48% of the stories that mentioned women presented them as refugees, either as part of a monolithic passive group, or as individual victims, all of whom were in desperate need of help or rescue. Women in non-stereotypical roles, such as peace and rights activists, accounted for just one per cent of the stories. Similarly, this study finds that women in the Boko Haram conflict within the period under review were represented by the news media as helpless/powerless and labelled as such. They were also represented as passive as against the active participation of some female sympathisers and collaborators of the sect like female suicide bombers. Florenza (1996) blames the news media for entrenching this practice and argues:

Verbal, emotional, economic, political, physical, or sexual violence against women must not be reduced either to abstract statistics or to episodic violence and isolate incidents. Rather, such violence must be understood in systemic terms and placed on a continuum of elite male power and control over women [...] that encompasses not only incidents of physical violence but also dehumanizing impoverishment (p. 42).

Most of the reasons for the news media’s underreporting of women’s experiences and perspectives on war are rooted in the patriarchal tradition of conventional war and mainstream war reporting, and in the control of news media organizations and narratives by men (Thompson et al., 2007; Del Zotto, 2002; Goldstein, 2001; Zeleza, 2008). The Political Geography Glossary (2001) defines conventional warfare as: "armed conflict between states and/or nations in which combatants appear in organized military units that are often outfitted

with standard uniforms, weapons, and equipment. It typically involves major combat operations that overtly seize control of territory, inhabitants, and resources". The Joint Publication 1-02 (2010 as amended) of the Department of Defence Dictionary of Military and Associated terms also explains that conventional warfare includes all warfare short of warfare using nuclear weapons and involves those forces not specifically labelled special operating forces. Piddock (2009) similarly argues that "it is safe to assume that conventional warfare is used to describe warfare as it has been come to be known throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, short of the use of nuclear weapons and involves high intensity combat" (p. 4). Conventional warfare is therefore the use of conventional weapons to fight a battle between two or more states or parties with the sole aim of defeating the rival party or state.

Mainstream war reporting on the other hand is happens when journalists cover news stories from a war or conflict zone. Sacco and Bossio (2015) argue that "the changing dynamics of reporting [...] during war and conflict is of particular interest because it is often a period of demanding, yet important journalistic practice" (p. 61). During war reporting, restrictions are placed on journalists covering conflicts and wars by government and military officials in form of 'whitewashing' of information and restriction of movement within the conflict zone (Sacco and Bossio, 2015). Sacco and Bossio (2015) argue that "this type of restriction also has the effect of whitewashing information available to journalists to report about war and conflict" (p. 61). Again, there is the demand placed on newsrooms and journalists due to "economic and cultural pressures [which have made] journalists to be forced to take 'short cuts' when collecting information" (Sacco & Bossio, 2015, p. 62). Other issues that have cropped up out of these pressures included reduction in information sources and the favouring of some sources and information over others (Sacco & Bossio, 2015). Another pressure is what Moeller (1999) refers to as 'compassion fatigue' due partly to "apathy and disengagement within the audience" (Sacco & Bossio, 2015, p. 62).

These restrictions and increased pressures in mainstream war reporting are further complicated by the rise of digital, online and social communication networks (Sacco & Bossio, 2015). The conditions within which journalists reporting from war or conflict regions can therefore be said to be very difficult for women journalists to operate. This might partly explain why female journalists who refused to answer questionnaires for this study directed this researcher to their male counterparts who they insisted always cover incidences of attacks from the Boko Haram sect. Journalistic traditions in a field dominated by men (as reporters and editors/ producers, sources, and subjects of the news) are particularly evident in reporting of war and armed conflicts, which are generally viewed as male domains (Barker-Plummer & Boaz, 2005; and Del Zotto, 2002). Respondent 3 echoes this view when he argues: “In most of the Nigerian media houses, we only have very few women in editorial positions. Often the reporters are men. Therefore, it is all about what the man is saying rather than what the woman is saying; [...] so we overlook some of the challenges of women”.

The intersectionality of race, class, and social status with patriarchal discrimination and other forms of oppression against women have also fed into the woman’s disadvantaged position in the Nigerian society. Mohammed (2016 personal communication), a 55-year-old public commentator and media analyst from North East Nigeria, argues that “women are subjected to second fiddle position and their concerns are lumped along with those of disabled people championed through feminine causes headed by glorified first ladies who themselves gained prominence due to their spouse’s influence reinforcing patriarchy”. Researches by (Batliwala, 1994, UNIDO, 2001; Adebowale, 2012) suggest that through a complex network of religious sanctions, socio-cultural taboos and superstitions that affects women in traditional families such as seclusion, veiling, and curtailment of physical discrimination in food and other financial resources, women actively participate in prolonging and perpetuating their own oppression.

Women in Nigeria have been accused of being their worst enemies. Some of them have accepted their discriminatory status and remain passive victims of patriarchy. If women journalists who are expected to be the vanguard for spearheading the campaigns against discriminatory practices on fellow women refuse to talk about this problem, then patriarchal practices will continue to dominate every area of society. Mohammed (2016 personal communication), argued that “Womanhood is not properly championed by even the women themselves who unfortunately are the victims of several abuses, domestic violence and lack of opportunities; [...] women issues are given less attention and even when they are portrayed they always seem to be in a helpless, pitiable situation.” Adou (2016) also argued that “women actively participate in the perpetuation of this discriminatory social order even on aspects that do not favour them; [an] attitude [which] stems from women’s lack of a feminist consciousness or [...] a will to preserve a traditional social order” (p. 90). Para-Mallam (2010) argued that “patriarchy as a system of special male rights is a worldwide, [...] the exact content or degree of patriarchal dominance varies across cultures, space and time” (p. 7).

## **CONCLUSION**

This chapter examined 404 articles and conducted 20 interviews with journalists and found that the Nigerian news media have represented women in the Boko Haram conflict in a stereotypical manner. This thesis also argued that the news media have often ignored women’s perspectives and experiences in the conflict. Overall, findings demonstrated that patriarchy fed by the societal, religious, political, ethnic and cultural factors within which the Nigerian news media operate inform news media representations of women in the Boko Haram conflict within the period under review, thus confirming Nigeria’s media framework of regional parallelism (Yusha’u, 2010).

The news media narratives were mostly steeped in gender stereotypes and patriarchal sentiments. Women in the 17-year-old Boko Haram conflict were mostly represented as

powerless, helpless and voiceless who do not have the agency or platform to articulate their experiences. The public space has been occupied by patriarchal norms, values and structures as demonstrated in the evidence and examples examined in this work. As a patriarchal society, traditional male values are institutionalised not only in the family, but also in the economic, social, religious and media dynamics in Nigeria. The intersectionality of gender with other social structures and identities like religion, race, age, class, ethnicity and patriarchal discrimination coupled with other forms of oppression have therefore permeated news media representations of women in the Boko Haram conflict.

## CHAPTER 6

### INTERMEDIA AGENDA SETTING/NEOCOLONIALISM

It was only after the abduction of 276 girls from a school in Chibok that the issue of women caught in the conflict began to receive attention. I covered the insurgency since the inception and I very well know that hundreds of women have been abducted but the media simply brushed over such stories. I blame the international media because they set the agenda for the local media to capitalize on, just like what we saw in the Chibok girls' saga. When the CNN and the BBC picked interest on the matter, it became a global thing. [...] We always allow the international media to set the agenda for us. Take the Chibok girls issue for instance; now that the issue is three years, it is the western press that still has the wherewithal to report exclusive stories.

-Respondent 17

The foreign media takes the lead by exposing the condition of the women after which the local media echo it.

-Mohammed (2016 personal communication)

These quotations by two journalists sum up the level of overreliance on foreign news media by the Nigerian news media as major sources of news stories about women and the Boko Haram conflict within the period under review. Boyd-Barrett and Thussu (1992) argued that “most world news flow emanates from major transnational agencies (including news agencies *AFP*, *AP*, *Reuters*, *UPI*; and major television news agencies) [who] also exercise considerable influence on the news agendas of client media, in both developed and developing worlds” (p. 9). There is considerable imbalance between developed and developing countries with respect to the volume of news and information that has attracted accusations of media or cultural imperialism. This chapter is divided into three parts: presentation of results; analysis of

newspaper articles that relied on foreign agency reports as their major source; and interviews conducted with journalists. The final part of this chapter is the discussions and conclusions.

## RESULTS

Table 6:1 shows the distribution of primary story source by newspaper where INT. stands for interview; P/S stands for press statement; N/C, news coverage; P/C, press conference and A/R, agency reports. According to this table, the six newspapers relied on agency reports as their major story sources in 207 articles out of the 404 articles analysed which represents 51.2%. The second primary story source is news coverage with a frequency of 114 representing 28.2%. This is followed by interview as a primary story source with a frequency of 21 representing 5.1%. This clearly demonstrates that Nigerian newspapers over rely on foreign news agencies and media organizations as their major news source within the period under review as shown in Table 6:1.

**TABLE 6:1**

NAME	INT.	P/S	N/C	P/C	A/R	TOTAL
<i>Guardian</i>	2	7	12	0	24	45
<i>Daily Sun</i>	1	8	13	2	25	49
<i>Thisday</i>	4	5	17	2	27	55
<i>Nation</i>	3	8	24	1	27	63
<i>Daily Trust</i>	6	12	24	2	58	102



<i>Leadership</i>	5	14	24	1	46	90
<b>Total</b>	21	54	114	8	207	404
<b>%</b>	5.2	13.4	28.2	2.0	51.2	100

### PRIMARY STORY SOURCE BY NEWSPAPER

A chi-square test of statistical significance to find out whether there is a relationship between primary story source and the six newspapers selected for this study recorded  $p \text{ value} = .000 < 0.05$ . The statistical significance however demonstrates a difference between how the newspapers relied on agency reports as their primary story sources in the 404 articles examined. For example, breakdown of the results in Table 6:1 shows that the *Daily Trust* newspaper relied on agency reports in 58 articles, *Leadership* 46 articles, *ThisDay* and *Nation* 27 articles each, *Daily Sun* 25 articles, while *Guardian* recorded 24 articles.

As shown in Table: 6:1 all newspapers analysed over relied on foreign news agencies as their major story source in their coverage of women in the Boko Haram conflict. This imbalance is reinforced by the responses from the interview answers from journalists. An analysis of responses on how they get their stories reveals that journalists covering the conflict rely on: press conferences; press statements/releases; interviews; wire services and agency reports from local and foreign media organizations; investigative reports; and on the spot news gathering and coverage as shown in Table 6:1. Findings demonstrate that the news media rely on foreign news media and wire services as their primary sources of news stories about the conflict. Some of the articles examined were replicated from major foreign wire services such as *Reuters*, *Agence France-Presse (AFP)*, and *Associated Press (AP)* and some major news outlets like the *British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC)* - both English and Hausa services,

*CNN, Al Jazeera, Bloomberg, Voice of America (VOA) Hausa service, Washington Post, New York Times, Times magazine and the Economist* among others.

This work therefore argues that foreign news media and wire services exert an intermedia agenda setting role on the Nigerian news media within the period under review. In some instances, headlines, pictures, and body of the stories are not changed or rewritten but are directly copied and repeated across newspapers. Oputu (2014) contextualizes Nigeria's news media overreliance on foreign news media for stories about women and the Boko Haram conflict:

On Monday, Boko Haram, the terrorist group that abducted more than 200 girls from a school in north-eastern Nigeria last month, released a video ostensibly showing the captives. *Punch*, Nigeria's most-read newspaper, posted the video alongside a scant hundred words drawn from the *BBC*. Nigeria's leading newspaper relied on a foreign news outlet to report on the biggest story in the country. *Punch*'s reporting isn't (sic) unusual. Since gunmen seized a reported 276 girls from their school in Chibok, Borno state, on April 14, Nigerian media have relied on a mixture of government pronouncements, foreign coverage and reporting in Abuja and Lagos. [...] few stories have featured on-the-ground reporting in Chibok.

As table 6:1 suggests, most of the stories that appeared on the bulletins of Nigerian newspapers about the four key incidents under analysis in this study were copies from foreign news agencies and media organizations. For example, the news about the abduction of the 276 Chibok School girls was first broken by the major foreign news networks before they were copied by Nigerian newspapers. The *Daily Trust* (16/04/2014) copied news reports by *Voice of America (VOA) Hausa service* and *British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) English and Hausa services*; The *Guardian* (17/04/2014) copied a news report by *Agence France Presse (AFP)*; while *Thisday* (16/04/2014) copied reports from *Agence France Presse (AFP)*. Even

the interviews contained in these reports and conducted in the capital of the Borno state Maiduguri, which is presumably safe, were copied by the Nigerian news media from these foreign news media.

Other stories that appeared on foreign news media about the abduction and were copied by some of the newspapers under study included: an article (*Leadership*, 16/04/2014) with the headline ‘Car breakdown saved some of us’, which was copied from the Hausa services of the *BBC* and *VOA* and another one captioned ‘Security men nowhere to be seen’” which was a copy of an interview conducted by the *BBC* with images from the *BBC* website (*Leadership*, 16/04/2014). A news story titled ‘Why Nigeria should sign defense pact’ (*Guardian*, 17/04/2014) was copied from *AFP*. Another story was a cover page article copied from the *BBC* that appeared in the *Daily Sun* news bulletin of 16/04/2014 captioned ‘Calls for release of abducted girls grow louder, locally and internationally’. This story was about the various calls made by both national and international bodies for the release of the abducted schoolgirls. They included a press statement from the then Nigerian former First Lady Patience Jonathan; Women Arise, a woman’s rights group; Women Advocates Research and Documentation Centre (WARDC); and the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF). All these organizations are based in Abuja and are by no means close to the conflict zone. Therefore, it is not at all clear why newspapers with headquarters or offices based in Abuja felt the need to copy news stories from the *BBC*. Moreover, most of the stories were not even rewritten but were copied verbatim.

News stories about the instrumental use of female suicide bombers were also copied from these foreign news media and wire services. For example, a story in the *Daily Sun* (28/07/2014), captioned ‘Two dead after female suicide bomber targets Nigeria petrol station’, was replicated from *Reuters*; and another article in the same newspaper that appeared the next day captioned, ‘Borno bans vehicles during Eid’ was copied from a report by *BBC* news

reporter Yusuf Ibrahim Yakasai. The story which examined the use of vehicles in Nigeria's north-eastern Borno state and its ban during the 2014 Eid celebrations, also included a report about a bomb explosion in the northern city of Kano. The report similarly analyzed Boko Haram's attacks in the region. The *Daily Sun* copied a *BBC* report about this attack even though its correspondents are stationed in Kano state where the suicide bombing repeatedly occurred. In addition, Borno state, the center of attacks by the sect is home to many journalists who have covered the conflict. Unfortunately, the *Daily Sun* newspaper relied on the *BBC* and *Reuters* as major sources of these stories.

Also, when female hostages abducted by the Boko Haram sect were rescued, the newspapers in this sample copied reports from foreign news media and wire services despite the fact all rescued women rescued were brought to the Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps mostly located within Maiduguri, the Borno state capital with maximum security. For example, The *Guardian* (29/04/2015) copied a story from the *Associated Press (AP)* which quoted a tweet by the Nigerian Army about the rescue of Boko Haram hostages. The question is why would a Nigerian newspaper not commission its journalist to directly get reports from the twitter account of the Army instead of relying on a foreign news medium? Another example was when the *Guardian* (30/04/2015) copied an *AFP* news report captioned: 'About 160 more hostages rescued from Boko Haram stronghold' while other newspapers attributed their news stories about the rescue to agency reports without mentioning the names of the foreign media they are copying the stories from.

Again, the *Guardian* newspaper edition of 20/02/2015 copied a story from the *BBC* and captioned it, 'Freed Boko Haram abductees reunite with families. Another article from the same newspaper on 19/03/2015 captioned: 'Boko Haram slaughter wives in NE Nigeria: witnesses' was a replication from the *AFP*. Part of the story reads: "Dozens of Nigerian women who were forced to marry Boko Haram fighters were reportedly slaughtered by their 'husbands' before a

battle with troops in the northeast town of Bama, multiple witnesses said Thursday”. Even though local news reporters are in a better position to access witnesses and even crosscheck facts about the massacre of these women, their newspapers relied on foreign news media to report the incident before copying it in their newspaper. The implication of this is that most of these news reports lack context and in-depth analysis of the incident. The authenticity of such news stories is also in doubt as it is often difficult to get reliable witnesses to confirm reports. Despite the presence of its correspondent in Yobe state, where the purported massacre occurred, the newspaper still copied the report by the foreign news media about the incident. Musa and Yusha’u (2013) argued that reports of such nature are likely to be filled with “misinformation, veiled stereotyping, presupposition, polarization and clear demonstration of poor knowledge of underlying issues in the conflict [which] raise questions on the credibility of the reports as the correspondents’ access to local sources is hindered and their understanding of the local terrain and context of the conflict could be problematic” (p. 260). Building on Musa and Yusha’u (2013), Abubakar (2016) also argued:

A combination of Boko Haram’s media strategies and international media’s approach to African news coverage has helped produce an image of Nigeria as a nation ravaged by jihadists’ barbarism. [...] Nigeria’s complex historical and socio-economic milieus that bred and sustained the insurgency were often ignored. The local media didn’t fare better, as colonial legacy, lack of capacity (both human and material) and imitation mentality led them sometimes to regurgitate the content of the international media (p. 10).

Contrary to this position, Gujbawu (2016, personal communication), a media analyst and public affairs commentator, argued that “International media are most times considered credible. They have the resources to reach whatever news source. Timeliness count in reports, hence the local media rely on the international media with timely and breaking news since they

are handicapped in accessing these news events and resources in the fastest possible time”. Most of the news stories about the abduction of female students which were mostly copied from foreign news agencies and organizations lacked the contextual background and analysis about why the sect in its 17- years campaign of violence suddenly decided to target women and why the security was not beefed up in areas considered vulnerable to attacks. These were some of the issues that were not included in the foreign reports and subsequently not covered by local media due to their overreliance on agency copies.

Could the use of stories from foreign news media probably be due to the absence of ‘qualified journalists’, credibility issues, self-censorship, or out of considerations for the safety of the journalists on the parts of the news editors? These are some of the questions that this work attempted to examine and answer. The interviewed Nigerian journalists identified five major reasons why Nigerian news media rely on foreign news reports as their major source of information about the attacks on women. These include fear for their lives; lack of equipment, funds and insurance cover; lack of training and professionalism; and neo-colonialism.

## **FEAR OF ATTACKS**

Journalists covering the Boko Haram conflict in the North east live with the fear of attacks, detention and possible death from the two major actors: the Nigerian army and the Boko Haram sect. While the Boko Haram has threatened and carried out attacks on journalists and media outlets in retaliation for alleged unfavourable to its cause, government security forces are also guilty of placing very stringent control mechanism to check the so-called ‘excesses’ of the news media in the name of ‘national security’. Some journalists paid the supreme prize while discharging their duties. For instance, Zakaria Isa, a 41-year news reporter, Hausa language newscaster and cameraman of the *Nigerian Television Authority (NTA)* Maiduguri zonal network centre was shot dead in the North eastern state of Borno in October 2011. Boko Haram claimed responsibility for this killing. About a month before the killing, Boko Haram had

issued a statement saying it would attack media organizations for what it described as misrepresentations of its activities, according to press reports. In an email sent after the killing, Boko Haram spokesman Abu Qaqa said the militants killed Isa "because he was spying on us for Nigerian security authorities" (*Agence France-Presse*, 2011). Similarly, in January 2012, Enenche Akogwu, a reporter for the independent *Channels Television*, was shot dead by gunmen suspected to be members of Boko Haram as he interviewed witnesses after the year bombings in the northern state of Kano, North central Nigeria.

Another journalist who received death threats from Boko Haram is Adeola Akinremi, the features editor of the *ThisDay* newspaper in Lagos state. In an email (10/05/2015) from Abu Musab Abul-Barnawi -an alleged spokesman for the sect, the sect threatened to kill Akinremi in connection with an opinion article the journalist wrote titled, 'Why Boko Haram don't deserve our amnesty'. In the article, Akinremi explained some of the interviews he conducted with survivors of Boko Haram attacks in parts of northern Nigeria and called for justice. In the report, he suggested that "granting the Boko Haram members any form of amnesty will be injustice to the children orphaned by Boko Haram and the women who have become widows". The email said the journalist: "You are now a walking dead and a prey to the Lions of Islam from the bullet of a passing car or a nearby rooftop". Also, in April 2012, Boko Haram claimed responsibility for simultaneous bomb attacks on the office of *ThisDay* newspaper in the Nigerian federal capital territory, Abuja, and a building housing the offices of *ThisDay*, *Daily Sun*, and *Moment* newspapers in the Northern state of Kaduna. Seven journalists lost their lives while 20 sustained injuries from the blast. A month later, the sect released a video in which members singled out *ThisDay* newspaper as well as other local and international news organizations for misrepresenting the group's activities, encouraging the public to support the government against the group, and attacking Islam in their coverage.

The Community for the Protection of Journalists (CPJ)'s Impunity Index (2017) ranked Nigeria 11<sup>th</sup> out of 12 countries that appeared on the index which is indicative of the dangers journalists from state and non-state actors face while carrying out their profession. In Nigeria 5 journalists were killed with impunity in the past decade and Boko Haram extremist group were identified as one of the major perpetrators by the index. Political groups, including the Islamic State and other extremist organizations, are the suspected perpetrators in one third of the murder cases identified by the CPJ. Government and military officials are considered the leading suspects in about a quarter of the murders (CPJ's Impunity Index, 2017). Population data from the World Bank's 2016 World Development Indicators were used in calculating each country's rating. Table 6:5 and Figure 6:2 show the number of unsolved journalists' murders as a percentage of each country's population. For the 2017 index, CPJ examined journalist murders that occurred between 01/09/2007 and 31/08/2017 and remained unsolved.

Because of the risks associated with covering the ongoing conflict, some of the journalists had to flee the conflict zone or abandon their profession. For example, two female journalists working for the *Nigerian Television Authority* (NTA) Maiduguri, zonal network centre had to request for a transfer to Abuja, Nigeria's federal capital territory because of the threats they received from Boko Haram in 2010. Others use pen names or replicate stories from foreign wire services or organizations about the conflict. Again, some journalists routinely exercise self-censorship by not covering certain incidents related to the Boko Haram conflict. For instance, some of the journalists revealed that to avoid incidents that might be risky, they rely on reports of these attacks from foreign agencies and news outlets. Respondent (1) revealed that "It is sometimes [a deliberate attempt] to play safe by getting detached from responsibilities". Dunu (2013) argued that "Nigerian journalists, often times tend to over censor themselves for fear of reprisals, particularly the public media" (p. 192). Olorunyomi (May 14, 2014), editor in chief of investigative news site *Premium Times*, argued that "The insurgency



defines part of its own communications strategy as harassing media institutions that they think are unfriendly, [...] the consequence of that is that it's also created a fear culture that's led to some form of self-censorship." Mohammed (2016 personal communication) also argued that "The journalists lacked the courage and determination to be out in the theatre or battle ground for fear of their lives and because they have no interest in taking risk [...] all the journalists operate from the safety of the Government house".

Some journalists also attributed their over reliance on foreign news media on the fear of retributions and sanctions from security operatives. This is because security agents are known to have threatened, harassed, arrested, detained, and seized the equipment of journalists and copies of newspapers on the grounds of 'national security'. For example, in December 2013, security forces assaulted broadcast journalist Yunusa Gabriel Enemali on the allegations that he was a Boko Haram suspect, after he took photographs of a policeman demanding a bribe. In December 2012, the Directorate of State Security Services detained and seized the equipment of Aliyu Saleh, a reporter with the weekly Hausa-language *Al-Mizan* newspaper, and Musa Muhammed Awwal, the newspaper's editor, allegedly over a story questioning the government's extra-judicial imprisonment of people in Northern Nigeria. On 09/05/2012, men of the Nigerian police arrested Hir Joseph of the *Daily Trust* newspaper and detained him for nine hours, for writing a news report about female officers from the police and other security units who joined protesters to demand the rescue of the abducted Chibok schoolgirls. Respondent 17 captured the dilemma journalists covering the conflict face:

The Army or the Police might not want you to report certain incidences [like] when troops [are] ambushed and 20 soldiers were killed; [...] Also, in an event where civilians were killed, they would not want [you] to report it in detail. Sometimes they would want to influence the figures you give. For example, if 50 civilians were killed, the security would tell you only ten were killed and would like you to report it that way.

And when you ‘deviate’, they would tend to checkmate you by way of intimidation or arrest. On the other hand, the terrorists would sometimes influence your report by giving you false information for the sake of propaganda to get publicity. They can call you on phone and tell you that they attack certain places and killed many people even if such thing did not happen. Sadly, they would call you next morning if they didn’t (sic) see the story to intimidate you.

This scenario demonstrates the ethical dilemma journalists reporting from the conflict zone are facing. In their daily reportage of the conflict, journalists are faced with the difficult decision of either reporting accurately and objectively and facing sanctions from the security forces or incurring the wrath of the Boko Haram sects. To avoid this dilemma, most journalists resort to self-censorship by either excluding some aspects of an incident they feel might offend these two actors; refusing to cover the incident; or using news media organizations’ or news agencies’ reports.

### **LACK OF FUNDS, EQUIPMENT AND INSURANCE COVER**

Another issue is the lack of insurance cover for journalists. Oputu (2014) explained that “major media outlets are based in Lagos and Abuja, and simply don’t (sic) have the resources to set up bureaus in the Northeast. Even if they did, it would be an especially dangerous assignment for reporters” (p. 1). Journalists covering the conflict might prefer to replicate stories carried in foreign wire services than visit the conflict zone because they are not insured against any incidence while carrying out their assignments. An unpublished study conducted in 2015 on Inequality through the pages: UK media coverage of the Charlie Hebdo and Baga attacks demonstrated that part of the lack of local voices of journalists from Nigeria in the coverage of the Baga attack was due to the absence of insurance cover and communication gadgets to cover the attack. The absence of security and insurance cover for local journalists covering the Boko Haram conflict zone has also resulted in news media overreliance on foreign news in their

representation of women in the Boko Haram conflict. Olorunyomi (2014) argued that “the kind of safety resources available [in the West] for journalists who cover dangerous assignments are just not even available; [...] most of the media houses in the country lack insurance policies for their journalists.”

A lack of equipment and funds to commission reporters to cover stories in the conflict zone was similarly identified as one of the reasons Nigerian newspapers rely on foreign agencies for news about the conflict. There is also a lack of modern equipment or communication essentials like satellite phones and other communication essentials for reporters to send news stories to their head offices. Respondent 17 explained that most journalists resort to foreign news agencies because they are:

Better equipped [and] positioned to go to areas our reporters cannot go; are well funded; have the international clout and so are given preferential treatment by our military to follow them wherever they want to go unlike our reporters who are faced with a lack of the technical and educational knowhow to cover a conflict like the Boko Haram insurgency.

The issue of working in a competitive industry like the news media was also identified as a key factor in the overreliance on foreign wire services. Respondent 18 argues that “to meet deadlines and publish scoops in a competitive media environment like Nigeria, I have to rely on foreign stories and wire services which are not only professionals but are credible”. Again, Borno state’s geographical location and terrain might have become a major challenge for news reporters who would ordinarily have wished to visit the conflict zones captured by the sect. a Borno state, the centre of the conflict is vast and is faced with challenges of underdevelopment and lack of infrastructural facilities and access roads. Due to the high rate of poverty and poor infrastructural facilities, most of the roads in Borno state are unmotorable making it impossible for journalists to access some of the difficult to reach zones.

When news of the abduction of the Chibok schoolgirls broke, Nigerian reporters could not visit the town. This is partly due to very poor road network coupled with the possibility of attacks from the sect as the whole area was occupied by the Boko Haram sect at the time of the abduction. This might be the reason why most of the stories about the abduction in Nigerian newspapers were replications from foreign news agencies and news media. Respondent 17, a news editor, gives credence to this assumption when he argues that “our reporters might in some cases find it difficult to access some of the areas under attack unlike the foreign media who have the equipment, satellite and insurance cover, [...], and so we get stories that are timely and reliable from these wire services, [...], the international media has more capacity, expertise and money to pursue a story”. This response again underscores the difficulties in accessing some parts of the conflict zone.

Also related to this is the refusal or inability of most of the newspaper organizations to pay the salaries and entitlements of their workers. For instance, a news report carried on *Premium Times* online news portal on 08/06/2016 titled “Unpaid Salaries Row: *ThisDay* publisher, Obaigbena, orders dismissal of 13 journalists” highlights the problems Nigerian journalists are facing with the refusal of their media offices to pay their salaries. The report written by Samuel Ogundipe captured the psychological and physical trauma some journalists in Nigeria experience. On 07/07/2015, members of the Nigerian Union of Journalists (NUJ) demonstrated outside the head office of *ThisDay* newspaper in Lagos, demanding immediate payment of their salaries and better working conditions. Similarly, in a series of letters from African journalists to the *BBC*, Adaobi Tricia Nwaubani (05/03/2015) who examined journalists' struggle for survival in Nigeria, argued that “Nigerian journalists are typically paid wretched salaries, and even the pittance to which they are entitled is often owed for months at a stretch”.

The above problems revolve around funding as communication is capital intensive. Andrew (2006) argued that “African media have also not had an impact on the world scene due to the lack of skill and funding” (p. 26). Olorunyomi (2014), editor-in-chief of *Premium Times*, also argued that “There’s a revenue crisis in the media generally in the country today; most [organizations] can’t (sic) even keep paying salaries; most of them can’t (sic) even maintain offices. There is just no motivation to go outside the box, investigate and come out with a unique angle to an incidence. Journalists therefore rely on ready-made stories from foreign media to fill in their pages.

### **LACK OF PROFESSIONALISM**

Professionalism in news media practice in Nigeria has also been affected by lack of funding, equipment and insurance cover. Most of the interviewed journalists attributed the overreliance on foreign news media to lack of training and professionalism while others resort to blame game narratives about this dependence. Respondent 12 argued that “editors have more confidence in the foreign wire services than our journalists because we are not properly trained on conflict coverage”. Also, Respondent 18 attributed this overreliance “on lack of professionalism on the part of local journalists who rely mostly on hand-outs, press releases or interviews to write their stories even as the episodic events are taking place within their doorsteps”. Andrew (2006) argued:

[Due to] the lack of professionalism among inexperienced local journalists, [especially] where journalism is open to anyone who wishes to practice it, there may be very little awareness that journalism involves the exercise of responsibility and judgment, as well as the claiming of rights. One characteristic that is often remarked upon by those working in areas emerging from conflict is the frequent irresponsibility of journalists who make wild claims without checking facts, are frequently partisan towards one political faction or ethnic group and are casually defamatory towards others (p. 26).

Findings also suggested that some of the journalists covering the conflict lack the professional expertise to write stories about the attacks on women and so rely on foreign news reports. This is because when some of the articles were examined, there were no noticeable changes in the headlines, body of the stories and even pictures. Instead of reflecting on limitation and finding ways of acquiring skills that would improve their journalistic skills, some of these editors and reporters blamed each other about this overreliance. Below is an example:

The fault lies with the editors who only sit down and google any story from international agencies and feel they are better than ours. The irony of it is that, the foreign wire service we freelance for, know and appreciate our worth and that what we send to them is very credible. Most of our editors are naïve and do not have a broad knowledge of the Nigerian society, its cultures and traditions and that is why the man from Washington will believe us - the local reporters - because we are on ground (Respondent 3).

On the contrary, Respondent 15, a news editor, argued that “Some of the reporters on ground are not proactive and are lazy in meeting deadlines. Therefore, to meet deadlines and publish scoops in a competitive media environment like the ones obtained in Nigeria, I have to rely on foreign stories and wire services who are not only professionals but are credible”. Another editor (Respondent 13) also argued that, “We find out that at times the reporters on ground do not make in-depth analysis of the situation maybe out of fear for dear life or sheer laziness, so it is always easier and cost effective to replicate stories from foreign media”. Reporters, on the other hand, insist that editors and the publishers are to blame for the overreliance on foreign news media. Respondent 3 argued that “this is because of laziness on the part of the editors and the owners who do not employ credible and qualified people to work in the media, [...], unfortunately, most of these appointments if carried out are based on political sentiments, [...], and the replication of stories therefore borders on ineptitude and laziness”.

The lack of professionalism could be attributed to the fact that because these journalists copy stories from foreign news media who are mostly engaged in parachute journalism, some of these news stories lack context and are filled with inaccuracies (Musa & Yusha'u, 2013) and therefore lack the professional touch. Also, because most of the respondents believe that everything western is credible and factual, the issue of modern colonialism or neo-colonialism is evident in how Nigeria news media represent women in the Boko Haram conflict.

## NEOCOLONIALISM

“There is this psyche that anything from the Western world is the best”.

-Respondent 3

Some journalists interviewed attributed their reliance on foreign news media to cultural imperialism and neo-colonialism. Some of the respondents interviewed confirm this. Respondent 3 revealed that “I wrote a report for my newspaper, they didn’t (sic) use it but because I freelance for *Reuters*, my office used this same story when they saw it on *Reuters* not knowing that I was the writer. There is therefore this mentality that these foreign wire services are more credible than our media organizations”. Similarly, Respondent 9 argued that “I think even the editors and the publishers believe in the foreign journalists more than we their reporters, neo colonialism at play”. Respondent 10, a news reporter, argued that “We are the reporters on ground, unfortunately our editors rely on foreign reports and when you ask them, they always say the reports from the wire services are better written and more credible. This is still the colonial mentality we have to date”. The respondents also argued that because everything western is better, they engage in self-censorship and lack the confidence to take ownership of their reports and so rely on western media. Following this line of arguments, Respondent 1 argued that “one has to know the African mentality that white or foreign things are superior to indigenous reports”. Respondent 6 also argued that the “public believe

international news media because they are more credible”. Also, Respondent 12 explained that because Nigerian journalists lack confidence in their abilities, they always believe in the superiority of everything western and imported.

In addition, the issue of authenticity of news reports was brought to the fore in the various responses by the journalists interviewed. According to Respondent 2, “foreign agency reports are authentic, because some of the newsmakers in Nigeria do not tell the truth by setting the facts straight”. Respondent 8 also argues that “the editors at the head office believe that foreign agencies are more credible than stories coming from their reporters. It is an extension of the colonial mentality that anything imported is better than what is produced here”. This corroborates and builds on modern colonialism, which is found in major African institutions like education, governance, law, religion, education, culture, and the media. Although the end of colonialism is a time of liberation from years of oppression, newly independent colonial subjects however realised that the colonial past has continued to exert a negative influence (Nkrumah, 1966; McClintock, 1992; and Wilkens, 2018). Loomba (1998) argues that “a country may be both postcolonial (in the sense of being formally independent) and neo-colonial (in the sense of remaining economically and/or culturally dependent) at the same time” (p. 12). This means that as an independent nation Nigeria remains within the confines of British colonial legacy in most of its structures and institutions especially the news media in terms of structure and contents. Closely tied to this is the issue of revenue generation through patronage. Respondent 11 associates the overreliance on foreign news media with the issue of profitability: “I guess the editors feel the foreign reports are more credible and will increase patronage of the newspapers by advertisers”.

## **DISCUSSIONS**

It is indisputable that Nigerian news media rely on Western news media as their major news source in representing women in the Boko Haram conflict (Table 6: 1). This is an example of



the intermedia agenda setting role of elite news media. As already indicated in the literature review, agenda-setting studies demonstrate that there is fourth level which (McCombs, 2004) referred to as intermedia agenda setting role of the news media. Put simply, the media agenda of one news organization influences that of a different news organization (White, 1950; Hirsch, 1977; Gilbert, Eyal, McCombs, & Nicholas, 1980; Reese & Danielian, 1989; Breen, 1997; Lopez-Escobar, Llamas, & Meraz, 2011; and Vargo & Guo 2017).

In an agenda-setting context, researchers have assessed the ability of the media to influence each other in terms of salience of coverage and attempted to answer questions like: Can certain media tell others what issues and attributes are worthy of coverage? Do certain media control the agendas for others? These researchers found correlation between the overall agenda of news media proving that news media can set each other's agenda across various media platforms depending on the issues and events (Protess & McCombs, 1991; Sweetser, Golan, & Wanta, 2008). McCombs (2005) wrote:

The pattern of news coverage that defines the media agenda results from the norms and traditions of journalism, the daily interactions among news organizations themselves, and the continuous interactions of news organizations with numerous sources and their agendas; [and that] journalists routinely look over their shoulders to validate their sense of news by observing the work of their colleagues, especially the work of elite members of the press" (pp. 548-49).

## **CONCLUSION**

Findings presented in this chapter demonstrate that foreign news media play an inter-media agenda role over Nigerian newspapers. All the predisposing factors that make for inter-media news agenda possible like the advantage foreign news media have in terms of technological advancement; the market and the financial capital to commission reporters to cover stories in

hard to reach environments (Masmoudi, 1979) do exist in relation to the Boko Haram conflict. Respondent 17 justifies this overreliance:

At the time when GSM services were cut off in Borno, Yobe and Adamawa States at the height of the Boko Haram insurgency, media houses like *CNN* and *New York Times* among others provided Thurayya Satellite phones for their reporters. When the Maiduguri Airport was closed, such media houses and many [...] chartered aircrafts for their reporters to fly to nearby airports to get to red spots and get stories. It was only international media houses that had the capacity to pay security agencies, such as the Nigerian Army to get security cover to get to 'no go areas' to get stories. Until today, there is no single Nigeria media that gave life insurance cover to its reporters covering the [conflict]; in fact, many media houses do not even pay salaries at a time the western media is spending millions of dollars to get stories; [...], to make matters worse, those that manage to pay do not pay journalists well, [...], how can you give your best in this circumstance?

Due to this influence as Golan (2006) suggests there is the need for future studies on international news selection process to consider this influence especially in the face of lack of balance on international news flow (Masmoudi, 1979; Said, 1978; and Golan, 2006). Whether because of fear, lack of funding, training, equipment, insurance cover, lack of professionalism, and neo-colonialism, findings in this work suggests that foreign news media exert inter-media agenda setting influence on Nigerian news media in their representations of women in the Boko Haram conflict. Respondent 17, a news editor, explains that "the local media needs to redefine their news values".

While postcolonial theories examined the continued influence of western countries over developing nations (Galtung & Ruge, 1965; Said, 1978; and Turner, 2006), modern colonialism (Turner, 2006) also explains the perceptions some of the respondents in this study to their

reliance on western news media. Building on an analysis of *BBC* and *Aljazeera*'s framing of the Boko Haram Insurgency, by Ezeah and Emmanuel, (2006) who argue that the "media landscape in Nigeria have colonial overhang [and that the] *BBC*, which represents the imperialist's institution, has huge presence in Nigeria, especially in the Northern parts where the activities of Boko Haram are rife" (p. 31), this study argues that British colonial heritage and neo-colonialism is still evident in Nigerian news media. Vagg et al. (2010) reveals that with a weekly reach of 23.5 million adults, *BBC* Hausa Service for instance "provides the largest services in terms of the number of listeners" [and] has around four times the size of the audience for the English service in Nigeria" (p. 5). This dominance has social, economic, cultural and political implications with a culture of colonialism (Ezeah & Emmanuel, 2006). Even though reports about Africa by foreign news media are often negative with the continent portrayed as a homogeneous unit (Galtung & Ruge, 1970; Said, 1978; Wolfsfeld, 2004; Franks, 2005; and Turner, 2006); and the inconsistencies and lack of contexts in some foreign news reports (Ndlela, 2005; Ezeah & Emmanuel, 2006; and Musa & Yusha'u, 2013), Nigerian journalists have continued to rely on these elite foreign news media as their major news sources as findings in this study demonstrates.

The news media in Africa and by extension Nigeria have continued to be influenced and measured against Western professional values and standards. Nigerian news media have continued to seek and validate their practice based on 'best practices', from Western counties. Nigerian news media have placed western news media on a pedestal and have always looked up to these foreign news media as their yardstick for best practices. An evidence of modern colonialism and neo-colonialism still at play (Turner, 2006; and Said, 1978). Nigerian news media have therefore inadvertently or knowingly continued to rely on foreign news media in news representations of women in the conflict. Nigerian news media have continued to rely on foreign wire services such as *Reuters*, *Agence France presse (AFP)*, and other foreign media

organizations like the *CNN*, *BBC*, *VOA*, *Al Jazeera*, the *Economist*, *Washington Post* and *New York Times* to mention but a few. The views of these media organizations are held in high esteem to the extent that they have become a reference point for any credible and reliable news about the Boko Haram insurgency. Post-colonialism was therefore fought on the platform of gender, ideology, culture and race.

This dependence is evident in findings about news media representations of women in the Boko Haram conflict. Some of the journalists interviewed for this research validate these arguments and attributed the overreliance on foreign wire service to the colonial mentality carried over from the colonial era. They argued that the foreign news media are more credible and reliable and as such their stories are relied on than locally produced stories. Even though Nigeria has regained her sovereignty from the British, remnants of colonial domination can still be found in the country's educational, legal, political, religious, cultural sectors which extends to the news media in both structures and contents. This is because and as the literature earlier reviewed demonstrated, studies have also shown that media reports are shaped and influenced by dominant ideologies (Gramsci, 1971; Long & Wall, 2009; Dominick, 2009; and Ramone, 2011). These scholars explained that central to this hegemonic control is the way in which economic, cultural, and power relationships and dominance play out and how groups with such powers exercise influence over those groups who are powerless. This therefore means that Western media either subtly or inadvertently impose their view of the world through the media. This is in form of inter-media agenda setting role of powerful elite media. Gramsci's (1971) postulations on hegemony is also manifested in how elite western media hold hegemonic influence over media in the developing world like Nigeria.

## **CHAPTER 7**

### **DEVELOPMENT JOURNALISM/SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY IN CONFLICT REPORTING**

The Nigerian news media is not objective in its reportage because women are given less attention and even when they are portrayed, they always seem to be in a helpless, pitiable situation

-Mohammed (2016, personal communication).

The sentiment expressed by this media analyst reflects another theme identified in the findings of this study which highlights the journalistic roles and practices performed by the news media while representing women in the Boko Haram conflict. This section is divided into 3 sub sections: analysis of the results; examination of some of the articles that might best describe whether the newspapers selected have met the principles of development journalism/social responsibility or not; and analysis of some of the responses by journalists working in the conflict zone on whether they have met the standards set by their profession in their reportage of the Boko Haram conflict in relation to women or not. These responses will also be examined against the backdrop of the editorial policies of the six newspapers.

Two frames that were used to determine the journalistic roles performed in news media representations of women in the Boko Haram conflict were the strategic/human interest frame and the prominence frame. The strategic/human interest frame refers to the extent to which the articles were of strategic editorial importance and of human interest to the public. The prominence frame refers to how articles that mentioned women and the Boko Haram sect appeared on pages of the newspapers (cover page; inside cover page-(page 2); centre spread; back page; and inside back page). The way an article that mentions women in the conflict appeared and was positioned on the pages of a newspaper demonstrates whether the newspaper

placed premium on the story on the story or not. Stories that appeared on the cover page, back page, inside front and back page and centre spread are categorised as strategic. The first 10 pages in a newspaper are next in the order of importance while the remaining pages are considered not important. This chapter, therefore, attempts to analyse results from the data collected with emphasis on the prominence and strategic/human interest frames.

## RESULTS

As shown in Table 7:1, and 7:2, the prominence and strategic/human interest frames recorded a high frequency rate respectively in each of the newspapers selected. In Table 7:1 for example, the six newspapers recorded 86. 6% representing 350 in the number of times the strategic/human interest frame appeared.

**TABLE 7: 1**

NAME OF NEWSPAPER	FREQUENCY	%
<i>Daily Trust</i>	102	25.2
<i>Leadership</i>	90	22.3
<i>Nation</i>	63	15.6
<i>Thisday</i>	55	13.6
<i>Daily Sun</i>	49	12.1
<i>Guardian</i>	45	11.1

<b>Total</b>	350	86.6
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#### **DISTRIBUTION OF STRATEGIC/HUMAN INTEREST FRAME**

A further breakdown of how articles about women in the Boko Haram conflict appeared on the pages of the newspapers examined demonstrates that 37.1% appeared on the cover page, 54.2% appeared in other pages, 6.4% inside cover page (page 2), while 2.0% appeared on the back page.

**TABLE 7: 2**

PLACEMENT	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Other Pages	219	54.2
Inside Front Page	26	6.4
Back Page	8	2.0
Centre Spread	1	.2
Cover Page	150	37.1
<b>Total</b>	404	100

#### **STORY PROMINENCE AND FREQUENCY DISRIBUTION**

Similarly, a chi-square test of statistical significance between the prominence and strategic/human interest frame recorded a p value= .000< 0.05. When the two variables were cross tabulated to find out the frequency of their appearance in the newspapers and whether they are statistically significant, the p value= .000< 0.05 was recorded which indicates that there is statistical significance between the prominence variable and the strategic/human interest frame in the 6 newspapers analysed. There is enough evidence that the newspapers are more likely to give prominence to the human-interest frame and hence a significant relationship exists between the two variables.

The six newspapers under analysis have sets of principles that guide and govern their operations as contained in their editorial policies and mission statements. These editorial

policies revolve around social responsibility and development journalism which encapsulates the tenets of objectivity, truth, fairness, factual, balancing of news stories, and pursuance of justice and commitment to the integrity and sovereignty of the federal Republic of Nigeria. For example, the *Guardian* newspaper claims to be committed to the best traditions and ideals of republican democracy; It believes that it is the responsibility of the state not only to protect and defend the citizen, but also to create the conditions, political, social, economic and cultural, in which all citizens may achieve their highest potential as human beings; and upholds justice, probity in public life, equal access to the nation's resources, and equal protection under the laws of Nigeria for all citizens. The *Nation's* editorial policies are to provide the public with information they need to be free and self-governing in a democratic society; vigorously champion a return to fundamental principles of federalism, believing that it is the arrangement that can best advance the multifarious interests of citizens in a country of many nations and faiths such as Nigeria; and serve as an independent monitor of power and hold those entrusted with its exercise accountable. Its cardinal principles are pursuit of freedom, justice, and market economy.

The *Leadership*, on the other hand, stands for the pursuit of truth, good governance and defence of what is right. *ThisDay* claims to be an agent of change and innovation with an unwavering commitment to the spread of information with integrity. *Daily Sun* newspaper's editorial policies include: to practice journalism with impact, objectivity and appeal that generates returns to all stakeholders; society, the investors and the practitioners as well as canvassing for the rights of women, involvement of women in decision making, and celebrating women that have succeeded in their various endeavours. Also, the *Daily Trust* newspaper upholds the libertarian principle with profound regard for social responsibility in their news coverage and editorial comments. The six newspapers claim to owe no allegiance to any



political party, ethnic community, religious, regional or other interest group as stipulated in their editorial policies.

For example, in line with one of its editorial policies of protecting and defending the citizenry, the *Guardian* newspaper of (14/04/2015), in its editorial captioned ‘Chibok Girls: One year after’, conducted an extensive analysis of the abduction which appeared inside the cover page. The editorial examined the implication of the arguments advanced by the terrorists as reasons for the abduction based on provisions of the Holy Quran. Part of the editorial read:

In their sadistic fury towards life, property and civility and their deranged mentality to pursue an ideology, the insurgents foreclose common sense avenues to rational engagement. Unmindful of the memorable and edifying history of their professed faith, Boko Haram insurgents engage in acts which are antithetical to established practices of a great religion. If in their warped minds, women have no other value to humanity beside being traded as sex-slaves, if girls have no business going to school, Boko Haram adherents do not understand let alone appreciate the intellectual heritage of the Islamic religion which harbors, for instance, the illustrious contributions of 19th century female Islamic erudite scholar, Nana Asma’u, the daughter of Usman Dan Fodio and grand relative of the present Sultan of Sokoto, who flourished as a prolific poet, scholar and an illustrious luminary of the education of Muslim women.

While condemning the activities of the sect, this editorial also analyzed the implications of treating the abduction of the girls as a remote case far from mainstream Nigerian society and the danger this portends for cohesiveness and nation-building. The newspaper editorial stated:

Sadly, [...] a certainly dangerous trend has now emerged over the abduction of those girls: erasure of memory. Or, an emerging ‘unshockability’ and desensitization of Nigerians to distant suffering [...] Perhaps, this may be due to the absence of proximity. Chibok is far, remote and removed from the hustle and bustle of the cities and the

cosmopolitan areas. It is therefore now a situation of ‘they’ and ‘us’; “their” problem is not “our” problem. This is sad. The gradual erasure of the plight of these girls from the collective memory of most Nigerians, and the systematic politics of denial it portends, are a classic demonstration of a weakening sense of fellow feeling. [...] By creating a distance from the Chibok girls, Nigerians are gradually entrenching an impersonal, anonymous, broken relationship between the girls and the public domain.

Again, *Daily Trust* news bulletin of 17/04/2014 captioned ‘FG under pressure to find missing girls - Parents, US, NLC demand action; DHQ says only 8 girls still missing; Shettima offers N50m reward for info; Jonathan meets governors, security chiefs; and Youth vigilantes join search efforts’ also occupied over three quarter of the edition of the newspaper with pictures and maps which extended to page 12 of that bulletin. This edition also carried a front-page comment captioned ‘One Outrage Too Many’. *ThisDay* newspaper also carried out an extensive and in-depth analysis of the menace and dangers the Boko Haram sect portends for women in a feature article that appeared on its City strings edition of 13/02/2013, which occupied its centre spread. In this article, although most of the people interviewed were men, they all confirmed the incidence of rapes and other sexual abuses, alongside forced marriages of women by the Boko Haram members. Captioned ‘Living in Kirenoa’, the news reporter visited a very remote town in Northern Borno, a former enclave of the sect about 400 kilometres from Maiduguri, the state capital.

If these news reports and analyses were taken seriously by government, maybe the horrors and menace the sect posed to the country would not have occurred on this large scale. The *Leadership* (05/05/2015) run a cover page story with the headline ‘Sambisa raid-214 Pregnant Rescued Girls sign of crisis- Shettima’. This story received prominence from the newspaper with additional four pages of investigative reports coupled with interviews and on the scene assessment and pictures. Again, the newspaper consistently dedicated page 2 to the

so-called Chibok Diary, containing highlights of the activities of the advocacy group *BringBackOurGirls (BBOG)*, the arrowhead of the national and global advocacy coalition to rescue the abducted schoolgirls by the government. An editorial by *Daily Sun* newspaper of 19/04/2014 captioned ‘Abduction of female students in Chibok’ examined this incident in the face of previous attacks on schools where students and teachers were brutally murdered by the sect. The editorial held the government and its security apparatus accountable for the abduction. The editorial read in part:

The nation has witnessed several abductions of female students and mass murders in secondary schools in the North-Eastern region of the country in recent months. These incidents leave us wondering what the country and our security agents learn from each attack. How come our security agencies get caught napping each time the insurgents unleash attacks? How, also, was it possible for the insurgents to operate for hours, carting innocent teenagers off into the night like herds of cattle? [...] the buck stops on the table of our security agencies when the peace of the nation is threatened. When innocent girls are taken to unknown places in the night, we cannot help but query the effectiveness of the security system and agencies.

This editorial asked the necessary questions that needed to be asked in a situation like this. The editorial also offered solutions: “There is also the important issue of being proactive on security, rather than reactive. Virtually every time the Boko Haram sect threatens anything, it follows it through. It is important that our security agencies work with those threats and ensure they are aborted, instead of running helter-skelter after the evil acts have been perpetrated. We also recommend greater synergy between the state, security agencies and the citizenry”. This editorial was followed by a back-page analysis in the *Daily Sun* newspaper written by its publisher Urji Uzor Kalu titled ‘Abuja: Yet, another blast’.

In the full-page article, the publisher catalogued the list of Boko Haram's atrocities in the country and queried the government and the citizenry's efforts in fighting the menace: "Who else will fall victim before we rise and salvage the situation? School children, market women, soldiers, policemen, worshippers, Christians, Moslems, atheists, pagans, tourists, foreigners, paupers, millionaires, blacks, whites, etc., have fallen victims to these endless attacks. The cost to the nation in terms of human and material losses is gargantuan. Will we allow this evil to continue"? The write up also explored all avenues at addressing the conflict and suggested that Nigeria should replicate how the West was able to fight insecurity in their land. The publisher suggested that "the Federal Government of Nigeria should understudy the Unites States' security architecture, modify it where necessary and adapt it [...] even Britain and many other European countries have done well in securing themselves". The publisher also addressed the issue of the North versus South and Christian versus Muslim divide which have always been at the root of most conflicts in Nigeria.

Although the above examples suggested that the newspapers have attempted to report the conflict in line with their editorial policies, there were instances where the same newspapers reported the conflict without consideration to these policies. For example, the *Nation* newspaper editorial of 06/08/2014 titled 'Female Bombers: Nigeria's terror campaign has entered a new dimension' fell into this category. The editorial did an incisive and extensive investigation and analysis of the phenomenon of female suicide bombing in the Boko Haram conflict. The newspaper conducted interviews and catalogued the sect's metamorphoses from initial attacks on men to the instrumental use of women as suicide bombers, and highlighted fault lines in the government's fight against Boko Haram. The editorial further examined the use of women as suicide bombers and the security implications for the nation:

The utilization of young female suicide bombers is an obvious response to increased security awareness and improved surveillance methods which have made it harder for

male operatives to carry out their evil purpose. Young women are generally seen as less threatening, and their ability to wear the all enclosing burka and hijab makes it easier to shroud their identities and conceal their deadly cargo.

The editorial further argued that, “Already there are speculations that the girls abducted in Chibok last April are either being readied for suicide bombings or have even been deployed in the next phase of Boko Haram campaigns.” This editorial however insinuated that the female suicide bombers might well be the abducted Chibok schoolgirls without any attempt to explain how it came to such a conclusion. In the whole editorial there was no authority cited to corroborate such claims.

A key event which highlighted the disconnection between journalists covering the conflict, key actors in the conflict and the absence of investigative reports and in-depth analysis was news reports about the abduction of the Chibok schoolgirls. Most media narratives about this incident were filled with major inaccuracies and discrepancies. For instance, two days after news of the abduction of the girls broke the military revealed that they have been rescued. This story captioned ‘Kidnapped Borno schoolgirls regain freedom’ broke on 17/04/2014 and appeared on the cover pages of all the newspapers analyzed. The report claimed that the Defense Headquarters had revealed in a statement that all, except eight of the abducted female students of Government Girls Secondary School, Chibok, Borno State, who were snatched by Boko Haram had been freed. The following statement attributed to the Defense headquarters’ spokesman highlighted this point: “More students of the Government Girls’ Secondary School, Chibok have been freed this evening in the ongoing search and rescue operations to free the abducted students. With this development, the principal of the school has confirmed that only eight of the students are still missing”.

Unfortunately, by the evening of the same day, parents of the abducted girls, Borno state Commissioner for Education and principal of the school denied the report saying that the

girls were still missing. A report captioned ‘Military recants on rescue of abducted female students’ the next day revealed that the Defense Headquarters last night recanted on its claims that all but eight of the abducted schoolgirls in Borno State had been freed. In a statement entitled: “Update on the abducted students of Government Girls’ Secondary School, Chibok,” Director of Defense Information, stated that it was deceived by the school principal, who had confirmed on Wednesday that the schoolgirls had returned. The statement said that in believing the school principal, the Defense Headquarters had released the report to the public but regretted that the same school head had denied its earlier position. The newspapers would not have become victims in these controversies and inaccuracies concerning the abduction and subsequently losing public trust if they had done their homework well by properly and thoroughly investigating the circumstances surrounding the abduction.

With the rescue of hundreds of women abducted by the sect, *Daily Trust* newspaper on its cover page of 27/04/2015 carried a headline story occupying half of the page captioned ‘Hundreds of decomposed bodies found in Borno’. In the article, the first paragraph read “Hundreds of decomposed bodies including those of women and children were discovered by a government committee in Damasak, Northern Borno state.” There was nothing wrong with this introduction. However, on the same page occupying the other half of the cover page, there was a picture of some beautifully attired Fulani milk maids captioned ‘Fulani milk maids entertaining spectators during the 36<sup>th</sup> Kaduna International Trade fair in Kaduna at the weekend’. It clearly diminished the severity of the discovery of hundreds of decomposed bodies of women and children killed by the sect. The import and severity of the discovery of the corpses was lost to the people, agencies and government that needed to take up more active action against the Boko Haram sect.

Some news stories about the use of women as suicide bombers also fell short of the elements of social responsibility expected of the newspapers analysed. For instance, the *Nation*

newspaper edition of 04/08/2014 conducted an analysis of the spate of suicide bombings by women captioned “Now Female suicide bombers” parts of which read: “Sympathy for the Chibok girls may pale into insignificance in the face of the volunteer by young girls to terminate their lives prematurely through suicide bombing”. There was no evidence to prove that the female suicide bomber was one of the Chibok girls, but the *Nation* newspaper had insinuated that this was the case. *Guardian* edition of 09/08/2014 in its Coverextra page did an extensive analysis of the phenomenon of female suicide bombing captioned ‘Female Suicide Bombers: Women in Hijab Face Stigmatization in Kano’. The article partly read:

Even though appearance of women in hijab is a common sight and part of the Islamic tradition, even among no-natives, the current trend is making the choice of adorning hijab an uneasy task due to public stigma because of the attacks. A source said ladies wearing hijab spend hours waiting for public transport as some commercial transporters avoid them to protect other passengers. If you go around many bus-stops [...] it would be hard for you to see a taxi carrying any woman wearing hijab. This is because once they carry one woman in hijab, other passengers would not want to board that taxi. Nobody would like to risk his/her life. That is the reason why people would not want to carry them - he explained. Another resident noted that women in hijab now face ostracism or stigmatization in public places, regretting that the female suicide bombers have generated unwanted discomfort against women in Kano and only public enlightenment could erase such stigma on them.

In the same edition another story captioned ‘Menace of female suicide bombers: A twist to National Security’ speculated as to whether the suicide bombers might be the Chibok girls: “there are talks that they may have turned some of the over 200 abducted Chibok school girls into human bombs”. Is the newspaper speaking from the position of authority? Has it cross checked its facts and from which sources? These cited articles were well written and indicative

of the fact that Nigerian newspapers have covered the conflict in relation to women. A more in-depth examination of news media's representations of women in the Boko Haram conflict as observed in other articles, however, raises very fundamental questions such as: Why did the newspapers not investigate the reasons behind Boko Haram's sudden inclusion of women in its attacks? What were the predisposing factors that led to this major shift by the terrorists? What are the implications of Boko Haram's attacks on women? What measures have been put in place by the government to check recurrence of attacks on women? What are the salient features left out in news media narratives on Boko Haram and its attacks on women? And what is the level of women's involvement in the activities of the Boko Haram sect? These and many other answers were not provided in most of the news media reports analysed for this study.

A cross section of journalists were interviewed on how they view their roles and whether they have been objective in their representation of women in the conflict. This study also sought to find out whether news media representations of women in the conflict have shaped and moulded public and government opinion and policies. Some of the answers provided an insight into how journalists view their responsibilities as reporters covering the Boko Haram conflict. Their response also highlighted the fact that the roles they play depend to a large extent on the level of control publishers have over the newspapers, editorial independence, external interference and the social, political, religious and cultural environment within which they operate.

## **SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY**

The social responsibility role of the news media places a demand on the journalist to be truthful, accurate, fair, and objective (McQuail, 2000). To determine whether journalists covering the conflict have been able to adhere to the tenets of social responsibility, this study sought to find out the various factors that determine their reportage of the conflict; factors that determine how they cover stories in relation to women in the conflict; whether their news organizations have



editorial policies on women and whether these policies have interfered in their coverage of the conflict; and how they view their responsibilities while covering the Boko Haram conflict and its impact on women.

On factors that affect their reportage of the conflict, the journalists identified immediacy; nature of attacks; number of victims and perpetrators; time of the attacks; response by security personnel; and the extent of destruction to lives and properties. For instance, Respondent 3 revealed that “News are determined by the happening in the country and the environment because this is what the people want to hear and see. Almost all the Nigerian dailies follow that pattern- writing about what is current, newsworthy, of human and national interest”. To Respondent 4, “Proximity, prominence, impact, immediacy, actors, and the aftermath of an incident” are some of the factors he takes into consideration in writing a news report. Respondent 8 also identified “Matters of public interest, security, disasters” as the issues that shape his reportage. These responses suggested that journalists covering the Boko Haram conflict rely on events and issues that are of human interest and national importance; the actors/personalities involved; type of incidence; editorial relevance; interest of the publisher; events and incidence from the catchment region of the North east; impact; aftermath; immediacy of events; disasters and conflicts; timeliness; casualty; and socio economic and political factors.

This study also sought to find out the key issues that determine the reportage of the Boko Haram conflict in relation to women. Respondent 3 argues that, “We have to consider the socio-cultural context of the environment which probably may not be comfortable with putting down how women were raped or manhandled by the Boko Haram. To a large extent I always look at what the challenges of women were when the insurgency started. How many killed, abducted, escaped, survived and I talk to them more than men. This is because they are the only ones that know where it pinches, they tell you stories about survival, how they are

feeding their children and how they protect and keep themselves”. Respondent 1 also argues that “Threats to their existence and sometimes the violation of their freedom” determine the coverage and attention he gives to stories that affect women. Also, Respondent 5 argues that stories about “Subjection of women to slavery and torture” receive prominence from him. Respondent 7 similarly argues that he pays attention to the position of the woman in society and tries to find out if she is a widow. This particular response Respondent 7 highlights the intersectionality of gender with class.

This study similarly sought to find out how journalists reporting from the zone view their role and responsibility. According to Respondent 16, his responsibility is that of “a social crusader effecting change through my editorials and reportage of the insurgency”. Respondent 15 also describes his role as a “purveyor of truth and the conscience of the society”. Respondent 13 reveals that his responsibility is to be a key agent of change and reawakening that will make society a better place. Respondent 11 also explains that it is his social responsibility to ensure that factual, objective, and up-to-date reports of the insurgency and its impact on women are reported although he finds it difficult to achieve these objectives at times. Although Respondent 3 sees his role as a ‘society builder’ and a ‘hope giver’, he argues that there is a thin line between what he writes and how he writes it in relation to the plight of women and children.

Objectivity is one of the major attributes of a socially responsible press. As a result, this study sought to find out from respondents whether they have been objective in their reportage of the conflict and its effect on women. 55% of the respondents said that their representation of women in the Boko Haram conflict has not been objective. Some of them situated professionalism and objectivity within the context of the challenges they face while covering the conflict zone. For instance, Respondent 16 argues that “the Nigerian journalists have proved their mettle in the coverage of this conflict despite the threats to life from the sect, lack of insurance cover, salaries and internet facilities and equipment; [...] we have been consistent in

our reportage and have given fair coverage to women issues with particular reference to the abduction of the girls and female suicide bombing”. Respondent 12 also argues that “despite the lack of any form of training about covering conflict like the Boko Haram insurgency, journalists have really tried in representing the side of women too”.

The issue of using a third party as the primary source of information about any related incident with the conflict was identified as another reason that has affected objectivity. For example, Respondent 9 argues that “it is difficult to be very objective covering the insurgency as there are times that you have to report the story using a third party as your source as assessing the conflict zone can be very difficult or even impossible”. Other respondents explain that contrary to their editorial policies which expect them to be socially responsible, fair and factual in their reportage, most of their stories about women are not carried as such the news media is not performing its roles of been an objective arbiter in the conflict. Expressing this view, Respondent 14 explains that “If you look at the coverage so far, women have not been given fair hearing and a voice to articulate their feelings on how the conflict is impacting them. For example, those rescued only speak through the voices of their male relatives”.

Related to this is the nature of the society which is patriarchal. Respondent 10 also looks at the lack of objectivity from the perspective of patriarchy and argues that “most of the reports so far were skewed to favour the men because it is a male dominant society”. Respondent 8 also argues that “the news media is constrained by societal pressures and nuances and is expected to report events and issues based on what is on the ground. As a result, stories that affect women do not receive the attention they deserve compared to issues that affect men”. Again, Respondent 11 argues that “newspaper reports of the insurgency and its impact on women have not been objective due to the cultural and religious setting of the conflict where men dominate public discourse and narratives”. Respondent 19 also explains that the newspaper he works for has an editorial policy of not antagonising people in the coverage of

news reports as such bulletins are always tailored to suit the religious, political, ethnic and cultural leanings of the region. This might explain why the news media conform to the patriarchal norm of the North east, which encourages male dominance in every area including the news media.

From these responses, journalists covering the conflict view their roles as social crusaders, society builders, purveyors of truth, the conscience of the society, and the final link between the government and the governed. Their responses also suggest that they are faced with numerous challenges which have affected their professionalism. Some of the respondents identify interference from their owners, security operatives and the government as major obstacles in the discharge of their duties.

## **OWNERSHIP AND CONTROL**

Some of the news reporters explained that interference from editors and publishers have affected professionalism. Interference for journalists covering the Boko Haram conflict are from the owners of the newspapers, news editors, the Boko Haram sect and the government. To gauge how the Nigerian news media have performed in representing women in the Boko Haram conflict, there is the need to examine how ownership and control of the newspapers have affected their performance. To do this, this study attempted to find out whether the newspaper organizations have editorial policy in relation to women. 65% of the respondents interviewed disclosed that their organizations have such policies in place. For example, Respondent 17 argued that his newspaper has “a special page at the weekends dedicated for women [titled] *‘Home Front’* which covers women exclusively; [and] *Tambari* a pull out in our Sunday edition which is dedicated to women issues”. Respondent 3 also revealed that his newspaper has an editorial policy on women that “canvasses for the rights of women, involvement of women in decision making, it also celebrates women that have succeeded in their various endeavours.” Linked to this is whether their organizations’ editorial policies are

guided by their readers in relation to reportage of the Boko Haram attacks on women. Citing the spate of female suicide bombings when it escalated, Respondent 13, a news editor argued:

Various editorials and news commentaries were commissioned based on their feedback mechanism that the sect was taking advantage of the hijab (clothing that covers their faces and bodies) women wear and cannot be searched. Through this write-up, the security agencies at the various checkpoints were able to devise a means to stop and search women which have reduced the incidence of suicide bombings.

Another news editor, Respondent 14 revealed that “through feedback mechanism his newspaper measures the pulse of the public on topical issues upon which reporters are assigned.” Respondent 19 also argued that “decisions about coverage are based on feedback from reporters at the conflict zone.” These responses suggest that the newspapers take into cognisance feedback from the public in their reportage indicating that in as much as the news media set the agenda for government and public, the public to some extent also set the agenda for the news media. Despite these policies, 60% of those interviewed disclosed that their publishers have interfered with how they cover the conflict. For example, Respondent 1 argued that “the owner of my newspaper is the editor-in-chief and he finally decides which story to use or not and the placement of stories on the pages of his newspaper; [...] the expectations on me have been so much and most times I am expected to be on top of the issues at all times, and this demands physical and mental alertness. Sometimes I was called at odd times to run after stories”. Respondent 8 argued that “my publishers bypass the editors and call me directly to either drop a story or to remove areas they feel will affect their relationship with a friend or business partner”. Respondent 6 explained that his editors and publishers hold the key to whether a story is carried or not and argued: “they determine whether to cover an event or not”. Respondent 3, a news reporter who has covered the conflict since it began, narrated his experience with interference from his organization:

A splinter group of the BH was negotiating with the state government and the federal government, I sent the story to my newspaper with inputs from a very reliable insider to the negotiations. The next day there was a front-page banner with my by-line that “BH was demanding N54billion from the state and federal government”. Boko Haram declared me wanted dead or alive. I was almost killed. The Saturday editor who edited the report never called me to confirm the story, he just took it to press. I fell ill because of the pressure. To date the editor has not shown empathy nor apologised for a story that almost caused my life.

Some of the respondents explained that interference happens because of their organization’s reliance on foreign agency reports at the expense of their reports. For example, Respondent 11, a news reporter, revealed that due to interference from his editors, he has been forced “to get scoops in the face of danger [while] prominence is given to wire copies at the expense of using my reports; [...] inclusion of issues not contained in my report; [and] using foreign agency version of the same report and not crediting me”. One of the exceptions to the rule was from a news editor who revealed that he has never experienced any form of interference from his publishers since there is an editorial policy in place that gives him the independence to control what gets into the newspaper or not. Respondent 17 argued:

The publishers and the editorial board do not influence content because there is editorial policy and each reporter and editor is expected to abide by it; [...] as someone on ground in Borno, my employers believe in my editorial judgement to decide the best angle to take, the headline and those to quote in the story. The argument is that I know who the victims are; their pains, where to address their issues and the best way to resolve it.

These responses suggest that interference comes from owners of the news media and because they are in total control, they dictate the tune or the direction and media content of their news bulletins. Mohammed (2016 personal communication), a media analyst, argues that

ownership has “negatively impacted on the media owned by the government which only provides information that only suits the political views of the administration in power [due to this] most people do not rely on them but resort to foreign and social media to obtain information they can trust”. Gujbawu (2016 personal communication) also explains the dynamics at play concerning government and private ownership of the news media and argues that “the government media downplayed several atrocities of the sect and could not report issues that were injurious to the then government while the private media that supported the opposition ensured reportage that showed the government as incapacitated”.

## **SECURITY AGENCIES AND THE BOKO HARAM SECT**

Another form of interference emanates from what the Nigerian army and other security agencies who attribute their control of media narratives about the conflict to reasons of ‘national security’. While the issue of ownership and control inhibits the journalist from presenting a robust coverage of the Boko Haram conflict on the one hand, the Nigerian army, other security agencies and the Boko Haram sect go after journalists who are perceived not to be protecting their interest on the other. Even with its claim of being a democracy and the press enjoying press freedom as embodied in Section 39(1) of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria which states that, “Everybody shall be entitled to freedom of expression, including freedom to hold opinion and to receive and impart ideas and information”, journalists still experience censorships, intimidation, harassments and even detention by security agencies acting on ‘orders from above’. Control of media narratives has caused the Nigerian military to go as far as detaining journalists who write ‘unfavourable’ reports about the conflict or seize thousands of copies of newspapers for alleged ‘security breaches’. The Boko Haram sect has also targeted journalists or media organizations they feel are not championing their cause.

Respondent 2, a news reporter, explained that the “interference from the army got so bad to the extent that journalists had to confirm breaking stories about the conflict from the

military and security agencies before going to press”. Respondent 17 also narrated his experience because of interferences from security agents and the terrorists while covering the conflict:

I had encountered many interferences from both security agencies and the Boko Haram insurgents. For instance, security agents such as the Army or the Police might not want you to report certain incidences; for example, if troops were ambushed and 20 soldiers were killed, they would not want you to report such unfortunate instances. In addition, in an event where civilians were killed, they would want to report details. Sometimes they would want to influence the figures you give. For example, if 50 civilians were killed, the security would tell you only ten were killed and would like you to report it that way. In addition, when you ‘deviate’, they would tend to checkmate you by way of intimidation or arrest. On the other hand, the terrorists would sometimes influence your report by giving you false information for the sake of propaganda to get publicity. They can call you on the phone and tell you that they have attacked a certain place and killed many people even if such thing did not happen. Sadly, they would call you the next morning if they didn’t (sic) see the story to intimidate you.

Respondent 16 also argued that he has experienced “pressures from security agents in the name of national security and even threat messages from the Boko Haram insurgents, [...] I have received several phone calls from my publisher asking me to drop a story, which I believe would have swayed the turn of events. Again, the security agencies like the military had threatened to detain some of us from writing and carrying stories inimical to the security while our papers have been impounded on several occasions by the military”. The journalists covering the Boko Haram conflict are in constant fear due to the ethical dilemma between development journalism and social responsibility. The major issue is how to navigate between



these two successfully and try and get a workable framework that will satisfy journalistic ethics and the tenets of development journalism.

## **DISCUSSIONS**

### **GOVERNMENT POLICIES AND PUBLIC OPINION**

The media agenda drives public agenda which invariably means that the media agenda plays a pivotal role in determining the public agenda. By giving salience to these issues the public might perceive those issues as more important than others (McCombs & Shaw, 1972; Oyovbaire, 2001; McCombs & Reynolds, 2002; and Tobechukwu, 2007). Whether social or political, local or national, public issues are generated by the media who depending on the importance they attach to such issues shape and determine how the public will react to the issue. This study is situated within the agenda setting theory of the media which argues that the Nigerian news media set the public agenda about the Boko Haram conflict.

To determine whether news media representations of women in the Boko Haram conflict have shaped and moulded public and government opinion, this study sought to find out the views of journalists covering the conflict. Despite interferences and challenges journalists covering the conflict have experienced, 90% explained that their reports about the conflict have helped in shaping and moulding public opinion and the government's response to the conflict. Respondent 15 argued that "the government gave more attention to the war against the insurgency when it saw the barrage of media reports against its initial inaction and inertia". Respondent 17, a news editor, also argued that "We prompt government to do the needful through our news coverage. In addition, we write editorials whenever we see the need to do so. For instance, when there was hunger in IDP camps, we wrote an editorial that the government must provide food. In addition, when there was a friendly bomb explosion in Ran in Kala Balge LGA, which killed over 200 people, we called for an investigation into the incidence which was done by the government". Respondent 16, another news editor, also argued:

Because of this coverage, people have become more aware about what is happening in the theatre of war and as a result lend their voices to more concerted efforts at fighting the insurgency. For example, due to our editorials and other write-ups and reports by newspapers, the government have been forced to be more involved in the war and to commit more resources, funds and personnel to the war chest, which has contributed to successes recorded so far. On paper, this is what we hope and expect to achieve, and, in some cases, we have done just that, for instance, our editorials on government's inaction on the fight against the insurgency have forced the government to put more effort which is finally yielding positive results.

Respondent 11 explained that "By sensitising the public on how the insurgency is affecting women and the public engaging in debates on what they felt the government should do to stop the conflict. Due to the coverage on the impact of the conflict on women, many NGOs have become involved in the rehabilitation of female victims while the government has put in more effort to ensure that the conflict ends. Respondent 2 also explained that the news media have succeeded in "empowering women to engage in agriculture, skills and trades, including the ones disbursed by Victims Support Fund (VSF) and the Federal Government. Respondent 10 argued that "it is through media coverage that the public gets its information about the insurgency and this forms the bulk of media narratives in the public domain. The Government has reacted negatively or positively because of reports by newspapers. For instance, the Nigerian army impounded copies of newspapers from the Nation, Daily Sun, Daily Trust and Leadership for what it termed 'security' reasons. Again, the military was forced to be more engaging and proactive because of the reports condemning their inaction by the newspapers. Respondent 9 argued that "due to our various news reports, people have come to understand the severity of the insurgency leading to pressure being mounted by people for the government to take action against the insurgents." Respondent 14 also argued that

“people have been able to form pressure groups, associations and NGOs such as the BringBackOurGirls (BBOG) campaign which has gained international recognition due to the media’s coverage of the abduction of the girls”. Similarly, Respondent 8 argued that “stories about the abduction of the Chibok schoolgirls received worldwide attention because it remained in the news media for a long time. Due to the regular coverage of the abduction story, the government was able to mobilise military hardware and personnel to fight the insurgents”. Respondent 1 also argued that “people have come to see the injustice done to women especially with the reportage of the Chibok girls’ abduction, the reports that came out made many to make the government answer to questions especially not doing the right thing at the right time”.

Some respondents were however of the view that news reports about women and the Boko Haram conflict have neither shaped nor moulded public and government opinion and policies as most of the reports about the Boko Haram conflict and its impact on women lack the in-depth analysis required for news reports of such nature. Respondent 3, a news reporter, argued:

Most Nigerians do not know or understand the enormity of the challenge women faced in the insurgency. How many reports have the newspapers carried? For instance, did they carry the implications of similar nutrients given to both nursing mothers and men? How many widows and orphans? The people are just not aware. The news media has underreported the impact of the insurgency on women. Nigerians do not understand that there is a humanitarian crisis and the challenges women are facing e.g. women begging on the streets because the news media has not reported this. The response of the people to these humanitarian crises should be a gauge to see how the news media has shaped public opinion. Unfortunately, people are not responding and so there is no impact. The response of the people is not commensurate to what we have done as journalists [...] the media has not set the agenda for the government to address the

impact of the insurgency on women. The only thing it has succeeded in doing is to draw the attention of the government to the dangers of not ending the insurgency.

Gujbawu (2016, personal communication), argues that “the different media reportage mystified the activities of the sect members and portrayed them more and better armed/ trained than the Nigerian military and the public believed it”. Media commentator Mohammed (2016, personal communication) also argues that “It became an issue that generated concern from the victim’s perspective as well as from the government whose lacklustre approach toward containing it drew a lot of criticisms; [and] most often there have-not been any proactive measures taken to address the needs of the women, it is only when their plights are highlighted that some officials respond to them which is rather unfortunate”.

## **SOCIAL, POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND RELIGIOUS IMPLICATIONS**

Findings in this study confirm the framework of regional parallelism as advocated by Yusha’u (2010) which applies to media practice in Nigeria. Some of the journalists agreed with this notion and emphasized how these factors shape their reports on women and the Boko Haram conflict. Respondent 17 explains that the newspaper he works for takes cognisance of stories that come from a region based on the culture, religion and environment and carry stories that are relevant to the issues of the day. According to him, “these factors play an important role in our bulletins especially issues to do with religion and politics; [...], for instance, we do not give space for fanatics to cause disharmony and the newspaper does not advertise alcohol; [we therefore] take note of the cultural and religious sensitivity in the environment we operate.”

Similarly, as a key feature of regional parallelism, newspapers from other regions such as South East Nigeria and South South Nigeria reported the attacks on women in the bulletins less frequently than those owned by Northerners as shown in Table 7:1 which might be attributed to political differences. The political climate has also influenced reportage and

portrayal of women affected by the insurgency. The geopolitics of the nation has affected the way Nigerian newspapers reported the insurgency.

The penchant by Nigerian news media to write news stories based on regional sentiments confirmed findings by Omenugha and Oji (2007) who examined the *Daily Champion* newspaper reports of the Denmark cartoon crisis which erupted in 2006 and argued that the newspaper's reports were biased in favour of the Easterners [Igbos], whose interests it obviously set to protect. In another study of the Hausa/Yoruba ethnic clashes of 2002, Omenugha (2004) argued:

Nigerian press reports operate within certain ideological frameworks. It is these frameworks which are explored, relived, made explicit for the readers in repeated mulling of tales. The newspapers are interested not in reporting the truth as it is, the events as they occurred, but to reconstruct and reaffirm their ethnic and cultural positions and identities. (p. 74)

Gujbawu (2016 personal communication) argued that "The southern based newspapers portrayed the insurgency as a Northern Nigerian problem. The Northern media tried to ensure that Boko Haram is not seen as a religious sect but as a poverty driven group [...] there was therefore polarization of the insurgency, based on regional and religious bias". He further argued that "the Northern media portrayed the then government as not doing enough to end the insurgency because of its political and regional bias." Mohammed (2016, personal communication) also argued that, "one can see the different interpretations made by media commentators from their perspectives which reflect their political, religious or economic background. For example, President Goodluck Jonathan downplayed the issue of the kidnapping of the Chibok girls which made him to pay dearly as it seriously dampened his political fortunes, while the issue brought about serious distrust amongst religious adherents."

Findings from this study therefore demonstrate that the ethnic, geographical and political biases and nuances of the owners of these newspapers affected how the news media reported and represented women in the conflict. As demonstrated in Table 7:1, *Daily Trust* and *Leadership* newspapers positioned the stories about attacks on women by the Boko Haram sect on their cover pages, inside cover page and the first 10 pages of each bulletin analysed which suggest the importance attached to the reports. *ThisDay*, *Daily Sun*, and *Guardian* newspapers from Southern Nigeria featured the conflict and its impact on women less prominently and frequently as shown in Table 5.1 and 7.1. Perhaps this might also be because these newspapers are owned by individuals from the Southern part of Nigeria who are dominated by Christians. *Daily Sun* newspaper is owned by Orji Uzor Kalu, *ThisDay* newspaper is owned by Nduka Ogbeibena, and *Guardian* newspaper is owned by Alex Ibru who are all Christians. Also, a breakdown of the composition of *Daily Sun* newspaper management and editorial board demonstrates that (90%) are Christians from the South east. Similarly, a breakdown of *ThisDay* editorial board also shows that Christians are in the majority. For instance, as a newspaper owned by a Christian from the South east, the *Daily Sun* represents the Boko Haram conflict in general and its attacks on women as a Muslim problem created by Muslims with little or no effect on Christians from the far South east region.

Another example of how the political leanings of the publishers have affected news media coverage is evident in the news contents of the *Leadership* newspaper owned by Sam Nda Isiah while the *Nation* is owned by Bola Ahmed Tinubu. Because both publishers belong to the then leading opposition party - the All Progressives Congress (APC) - these newspapers took advantage of any attacks by the sect and reported such incidents extensively in their bulletins suggesting the inability of then President Goodluck Jonathan under the Peoples' Democratic party (PDP) to prosecute the war against the Boko Haram sect. Again, regional politics and to an extent religion have played major roles on how the newspapers reported the

insurgency and how it affected women. For instance, members of the *Daily Trust* newspaper's board of directors are made up of 80% Muslims with an editorial policy of protecting 'Northern interest' (Respondent 17). Confirming this, Respondent (17), an editor with the organization argues that "each newspaper has its area of interest and though the medium I represent, the *Daily Trust* is national in outlook, its primary concern is Northern Nigeria. As such, issues relating to the region are considered first before any other; this is without prejudice to being fair to all". Therefore, to disprove and dissociate itself from the sect's activities and as champion of the Muslim North, the *Daily Trust* has consistently highlighted and condemned Boko Haram's activities since the commencement of its bloodletting activities in 2009. To do this, the newspaper placed premium on the sect's anti-Islamic operations and activities.

Yusha'u (2010) explains that Nigerian newspapers tend to consider regional and political affiliations in their reportage of complex issues like politics and conflicts. For example, some of the opposition newspapers like the *Leadership* were not always critical of government in their daily bulletins giving credence to Irvin's (2006) claim that "journalists find it easier to follow the official line, or to 'index' themselves to the 'official politics' [which] protects [them] from criticism and helps them to 'frame' conflict in a consensual manner" (p. 34). However, there were cases where stories of national significance receive the same coverage, frequency and even prominence in newspapers and are not dependent on any regional bias. For instance, Respondent 17 argues:

While we are mindful of our social responsibility, we are not unmindful of the fact that Media Trust, the publishers of the *Daily Trust* titles are into serious business and to sustain themselves in the business of selling their package, they must tilt their editorial policy in line with the expectations of the readers. For instance, while we know very well that the president is from the North, we always look for the shortcomings of the ruling All Progressive Congress (APC) government and report the same. We also know

that the Nigerian Army does not want their iniquities or failures reported, especially in the manner they confront the Boko Haram insurgency, but we report all such stories in the interest of fairness, business and the safety of the victims, who would not be treated fairly unless their plights are reported by the media even though there are national security issues.”

Another factor that has influenced the news media’s representations of women and the Boko Haram conflict is the commercialization drive and the pursuit of profit margins by the owners. Most media organizations consider market forces particularly advertising as of more importance than adhering strictly to the ethical standards of objectivity, balance, and truthfulness (Harcup & O’Neill, 2017). Respondent 2’s response about his newspaper’s policies explains this further: “economic factors have a great influence on our reportage [citing] the recent forex flexibility by the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) which has increased the cost of newspaper production by 25-30 percent subsequently affecting the prices of our newspaper per unit”. This reporter who works for a major newspaper in the South explains that his organization places importance on profit-making and so considers advertising as of major importance. Respondent 17 also argues that “we report all [...] stories in the interest of fairness, business and the safety of the victims, who would not be treated fairly unless the media report their plights even though there are national security issues”. Although this Respondent acknowledges the importance of the business side of his newspaper, he still strives to practice within the ethical standard of the profession.

## **SKILLS**

Despite the large number of graduate journalists in the Nigerian media industry, the skills of investigative journalism have not been widely acquired or exhibited. Even issues like conflicts, wars and disasters do not often receive the seriousness and professional expertise they deserve



from journalists. For example, very serious issues that involve the loss of thousands of lives like the Boko Haram conflict are treated with levity. Respondent 3 explains:

Because of the lack of training in terrorism and insurgency, Nigerian journalists do not know how to give this representation while some do not just care. That is the gap in the reportage of the BH in the last five years. The Nigerian media tend to overlook many things especially the issue of women and children. Boko Haram was however very strategic in its attacks and understood the implications of targeting women and children. They know that women and children are the heart of society. Kidnap a woman and you have successfully ruined ten families; kill a woman and you ruin a whole lineage. Unfortunately, the Nigerian media did not do that analysis and could not come to terms with what BH is doing. Most of the times when BH issues press releases and videos, journalists do not adequately analyse and interpret them the way they ought to. Journalists were only interested in the people and structures destroyed. Nigerian media only concentrated on peripheral things at the expense of in-depth analysis.

Even with the training and retraining programs organized by various educational and development organizations from national and international bodies, most reporters covering the Boko Haram conflict and other conflicts of similar nature still lack the technical skills to do their jobs well. Again, the fault might lie with the journalists receiving such trainings who are often not interested in the training but the allowances that might follow such programmes. Even where journalists receive training through courses, workshops and seminars, most of these are ineffective as they are often tokenistic (Eric. 2017).

## **DEVELOPMENT JOURNALISM AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY**

There is a conflict of interest between how Nigerian news media play their roles as socially responsible entities and development journalists on the one hand and the interest of their

owners on the other. This may perhaps explain why some newspapers like the *Leadership* which claims to take up the fight for the liberation of the people from all forms of oppression, and *ThisDay* newspaper which claims to be an agent of change and innovation with a commitment to social change are still struggling with issues of professionalism. Nigerian news media's deep-rooted interest be it political, commercial, religious, ethnic, and regional can therefore not be overlooked while examining news media representations of women in the Boko Haram conflict.

Have the news media thus performed its traditional and normative role of informing, educating, and sensitizing the public about the incidents of Boko Haram's attacks on women? And have the Nigerian news media acted as watchdogs of the society or development journalists? Nigerian journalists are struggling to perform socially responsible journalism but are constrained by the challenges of: poor remuneration; the polarization of the media along North-South divide; ownership influence that affects journalistic roles and practices; ideological and political considerations of the proprietors; the issue of protocol journalism in which highly placed public officials are deliberately shielded from embarrassing questions and investigations in return for some consideration for the media (Jibo, 2003); and extreme commercialization of news; partisan, biased or ethnic reporting of events (Olukotun, 2000).

Although African journalists profess a commitment to the western libertarian principles of truthfulness, factual and social responsibility independent of government, their governments prefer the development type of journalism which demands a reciprocal working relationship. While discharging this social responsibility role, most governments demand of journalists to perform their duties within the ambits of development journalism. This conflicting role expectations between the media and their governments' results to an 'ethical dilemma'. This dilemma is demonstrated in findings in this research. Similarly, governments have continued to confine the media in a space where it was unable to flourish and contribute effectively to

changing society. Governments' control of the media is premised on the need to work as partners for the development goals of the nation.

The newspapers also represented the impact of the Boko Haram attacks on women within the period under review using the human-interest frame as shown in Table 7:1. These results suggest that the newspapers attached editorial importance to the attacks on women in line with their editorial policies of highlighting issues of human interest to the public. Although these newspapers attempted to represent women in the attacks according to their editorial policies, significance was placed more on the helplessness of these women who were represented and constructed as voiceless. Gujbawu (2016 personal communication) argues that "the media has overlooked the activities of women masterminds and deadly acts of women sympathizers and supporters of the insurgents". Gordon et al. (2011) also argue that "the media have not handled properly the job of being representative and portraying diversity; [...] the media have [...] failed to recognize the values, aspirations, or even the common humanity of groups outside [...] the circles frequented by mainstream media people" (p. 133). Dates and Pease (1994) also argue that "many minorities who were still outside society's mainstream had good reason to think their perspectives are at best warped by the media or, worse, not heard at all" (p. 90).

## **CHAPTER EIGHT**

### **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

This research is one of the first attempts to examine news media representations of women in the Boko Haram conflict. The focus of this study on women as a separate category is a deliberate attempt to redress the obvious imbalance in every fabric of the Nigerian society including the news media where they are misrepresented and underrepresented and relegated to mere appendages. This is because studies have shown (Pereira, 2004; Cudd & Andreasen, 2005; Barker, 2008; Liffen, 2011; Jones et al., 2010; Duncan et al., 2013; Novikau, 2017; and World Gender Gap Report, 2017) that women have always experienced patriarchal oppression. In Nigeria, research (Harrison et al., 2008; Idowu et al., 2015; and Ekhaton, 2015) have identified various socio cultural, religious and traditional practices that have discriminated against women.

Studies (Nacos, 2005; Alat, 2006; Byerly & Ross, 2006; Geertsema, 2009; and Sahu & Alam, 2013) have also acknowledged the news media as one of the major institutions that have instituted and reinforced discrimination against women using gender clichés and stereotypes. Radical feminism has also blamed patriarchal social structures such as socio-cultural and socio-political systems for violence against women (Radford & Stanko, 1996; Moser & Clark, 2001; Cockburn, 2001; and hooks, 2005). In Nigeria where gender inequity and women's subordination take the form of pervasive beliefs that women are (men's) 'property', whose adult status is mediated via male members of their family, the news media represents women as the 'weaker', voiceless victims of conflicts. Studies have also shown that Nigerian news media narratives are often replete with misrepresentation/ underrepresentation of women (Okunna, 2004; Anyanwu, 2001; Nwaolikpe, 2014; Christopher, 2016; and Ozoemena, 2017). In conflicts patriarchy has also been blamed for the stereotypical representation of women by the news media (Rodgers, 2003; Steeves, 2007; and Novikau, 2017). Gender scholars have also

established a link between the marginalization of women and the culture and traditions of Nigeria (Omololu, 1972; Anyanwu, 2001; Okome, 2002; and Ajayi, 2007).

The four research questions that guided this study on how the Nigerian news media have represented women in the Boko Haram conflict: How the news media represented women in the conflict; the dominant frames used in this representation; factors that influenced this representation; and how news professionals interpret these representations; were answered by this study. Results from this thesis therefore suggest that the dominant frames used by the news media in representing women in the Boko Haram conflict include: Patriarchy and its derivatives, gendered, powerless/helpless, strategic/human interest, attribution of responsibility, and label frames as shown in Table 5:1. Some of the factors that influenced these representations include: socio-cultural, religious, economic, regional, British colonial legacy, and the intersectionality of gender with social structures of race, religion, sex, ethnicity and patriarchal oppression. Findings also suggest that the Nigerian news media over relied on foreign news media as their primary story source about the conflict because of some of the key indicators affecting journalistic roles and practice (Slavtcheva-Petkova & Bromley, 2018) such as safety concerns, inadequate funding, lack of professionalism, equipment and training, and pressures from state and non-state actors.

Findings from this study also confirm the unequal status and discriminated position of women affected by the Boko Haram conflict. This research like many other studies before it also suggests that women in the Boko Haram conflict were represented by the news media in patriarchal phrases and gender stereotypes compounded by the fact that men are the definers of what goes into news bulletin. With 404 articles coded, analysed and discussed, the results are clearly indicative of the perpetuation of gender stereotypes and highly biased reporting about women in conflicts. Women are typically represented as ‘victims’ and voiceless

neglecting the active participation and collaboration of some supporters of the sect by the Nigerian news media.

### **Patriarchy and gender stereotypes**

Nigerian news media narratives are permeated by gender stereotypes and patriarchal phrases which corroborate previous scholarly works (Crenshaw, 1989; Butler, 1999; Okome, 2002; Rodgers, 2003; Byerly, 2004; hooks, 2005; Lemish, 2006; Steeves, 2007; Creedon & Cramer, 2007; Geertzema, 2009; White, 2009; Hill Collins, 2012; Harrison et al., 2008; Idowu et al., 2015; and Ozoemena, 2017). These also suggest that women remain within the confines of patriarchal oppression further compounded by the intersectionality of gender with racial, ethnic, religious, class, and sexual, identities. Building on Geertsema (2009) who argues that “the intersection of race and gender contributes to the othering of women, as news reports about the third world often create an ‘us/them’ dichotomy, with the ‘other’ represented as unstable and violent, while ‘us’ are being shown as industrialized, ordered, and stable” (p. 156), this study finds that women in the conflict are not only oppressed by patriarchy but are also discriminated upon through the intersectionality of their gender with other social structures and identities. Findings also confirm the positions of Said (1978) on ‘Orientalism’ and Spivak (1993) on the ‘Subaltern’ that the woman remains marginalised within the confines of patriarchal discourse as the ‘other’ and does not have the platform to enunciate herself and therefore she remains voiceless.

Findings in the study also demonstrate that the voice of the woman affected by the Boko Haram conflict is absent in news media narratives. For example, women rescued from the camps of the terrorists by security operatives were not heard (*Daily Trust*, 02/05/2015); while women polio workers attacked by the sect in Kano state remained silenced as their experiences were only narrated through their male relatives (*Daily Trust*, 10/02/2013). Again, most of the photographic and video images that were published by the news media show some of the

rescued Chibok girls flanked by male relatives, male government officials and male security men. Where are the women? Media representations demonstrate the silencing of women in the conflict by the government, society and the news media. Women affected by the Boko Haram conflict are not only ‘doubly silenced’ from within and without their families, coupled with the absence of a platform to speak about their experiences, they are seen and treated as the ‘other’ by the society and the Nigerian news media as suggested by findings in this study.

Linked to this as reflected in the results is the complete absence of the voice of female journalists in the research. Female journalists reporting from the conflict region rebuffed attempts to interview them for this research. Attempts to make them change their minds and tell their stories through these questionnaires were not successful. Nigerian feminist writers (Yakubu, 2001, Ajayi, 2007, and Tar Tsaaio, 2010) have argued that only women can best tell their stories and represent their experiences as authentically as possible. Unfortunately, findings from this study suggest the contrary. This is so because the voice of female journalists who are expected to provide the platform where the plights of women caught up in the Boko Haram conflict could be heard were absent. Nigerian female journalists have not been able to break away from patriarchal and cultural traditions that have hindered the woman. Similarly, the lack of a very strong and effective women’s page in most Nigerian newspapers has further compounded the problem. Although some do exist, only a few handle more serious issues as these pages mainly cover fashion and style, the home and cooking. These issues still revolve around women’s traditional roles of domesticity and sexuality as represented in the news media. The Nigerian news media also derive their operating principles from the patriarchal society in which they operate (Ozoemena, 2017).

### **Inter-media agenda setting and neo-colonialism**

Findings also suggest the continued dependence of Nigerian newspapers on foreign news organizations and wire services as their primary sources of stories about women in the conflict.

These results confirm previous research findings that elite news media set the agenda for other less powerful media (White, 1950; Hirsch, 1977; Gilbert et al., 1980; Reese & Danielian, 1989; Breen, 1997; Lopez-Escobar et al., 2011; and Vargo & Guo, 2017). All the predisposing factors that make for inter-media news agenda possible like the advantage foreign news media have in terms of technological advancement; the market and the financial capital to commission reporters to cover stories in hard to reach environments (Masmoudi, 1979) have been highlighted in the articles analysed. This is in addition to the fear of attacks, lack of funding, training, equipment, insurance cover lack of professionalism; and neo-colonialism which have hindered Nigerian journalists from directly covering the conflict. These challenges and pressures suggest that the Nigerian news media rely more on foreign news organizations and wire services than on stories they locally produce.

The consequence of this style of reporting is that reporters who write stories about the continent and replicate stories from Western news media do not include the contextual background and the underlying causes of why such conflicts occur. This lack of contextualisation is one of the problems that have undermined Western media reporting about Africa (Musa & Yusha'u, 2013; and Abubakar, 2016). For instance, news reports about the abduction of the Chibok schoolgirls which were replicated by Nigerian newspapers from foreign news media were replete with inaccuracies, inconsistencies, and lacked contextual background. This further compounded the confusion in most of the news stories, reports and analysis about women affected by the Boko Haram conflict. Despite negative portrayal of developing nations by western media, findings from this study demonstrate that Nigerian news media still rely on them as their major news sources in representing women in the Boko Haram conflict as shown in Table 6: 1. This dependence suggests neo-colonialism and modern colonialism (Turner, 2006) where Nigerian news media have continued to rely on elite news media as their major sources for stories about the Boko Haram conflict. Foreign news media



therefore exert inter-media agenda setting role on Nigerian news media in a relationship of modern colonialism and neo-colonialism.

### **Development journalism and Social responsibility**

Virtually all codes and laws establishing and regulating the Nigerian news media practice emphasize objectivity, accuracy and balanced reportage of events and issues (Guild of Editors' code of conduct; Nigerian Union of Journalists' code of conduct; Nigerian Press council; and Nigerian Broadcasting Commission's code of conduct) which are all tenets of social responsibility roles of the press. For instance, clause 3.3.3 of the broadcasting code states that "all sides to any issue of public interest shall be equitably presented to ensure fairness". Also, clause 2 (ii) of the Code of ethics for Nigerian journalists, specifies that "a journalist should refrain from publishing inaccurate and misleading information". The implication in conflict coverage like the Boko Haram insurgency is the need for responsible journalism where balance, accuracy, objectivity and factual reporting should be the guiding principles.

The Nigerian news media have been accused of not been socially responsible but biased and unethical; misrepresenting the opinion of one version in favour of an opposing group; quoting people out of context; reporting conflicts from a religious, ethnic or political considerations; over dramatization and denationalization of conflicts with a view to selling more copies of newspapers or magazines (Ekwo, 1996; Oso, 2000; Galadima & Enighe, 2001; Jibo & Okoosi-Simbine, 2003; Tobechukwu, 2007; Ayoola, 2008; Yusha'u, 2010; Oputa, 2011; Dunu, 2013; Ayoola & Olaosun, 2014; Hamid & Baba, 2014; and Shehu, 2015). Despite these accusations, findings from this study are indicative of the fact that the extent to which Nigerian journalists especially those reporting from the conflict zone have been able to adhere to the demands of development journalism while attempting to be socially responsible, depended on how they were able to counter the challenges and pressures they encounter daily. Such difficulties range from: interference from their owners, government, security operatives, and

the terrorists; lack of salaries, insurance cover, and equipment; inadequate training on conflict journalism; the polarization of the media along North -South divide which translates to biased, regional or ethnic reporting of events; and ideological and political considerations of the proprietors. Other challenges are extreme commercialization of news and quest for economic patronage; partisanship and political influence (Olukotun, 2000; Omenugha & Oji, 2008; and Ebo, 2009).

### **Regional Parallelism**

Findings from this study have also led to a better understanding of how journalists practice in Nigeria. Applying the framework of regional parallelism developed by Yusha'u (2010) as a form of media system in Nigeria, this study argues that the North/South divide in Nigerian politics is so deep that public policies and programmes defer to it, while the news media tilt their reports and analyses to accommodate the interests of its adherents (Oyovbaire, 2001; Jibo & Okoosi-Simbine, 2003; and Yusha'u, 2010). These results confirm regional parallelism where Nigeria's media system takes on the colouration of the social, political, religious, ethnic, geographical and regional inclination of the society within which it operates. The media representation of women in the Boko Haram conflict therefore took on the regional, religious, political, ethnic and geographical biases and nuances of the owners.

The study also demonstrated that while some of the newspapers tried to act as arbitrary observers playing the role of an objective medium, others acted as mouthpiece of the Nigerian government or the opposition, while some became the battle field upon which the war against terrorism is fought (Thussu & Freedman, 1978). The Nigerian news media have attempted to perform their roles despite daunting challenges and as corroborated by Gujbawu (2016 personal communication), a media commentator and analyst, "the news media have discharged their social responsibility role by frequent reports of attacks on communities; providing information and educating audiences on the activities of the sect and how to stay safe; reporting on the

crimes against humanity; and reporting on the successes of the Nigerian military in degrading the sect”. Mohammed (2016 personal communication) queried this analysis and argued that despite the role of the news media in publicising the insurgency, the terrorist group has exploited this publicity by becoming larger than life and instilling fear into the populace. This can better be understood within the context of the maximum use of propaganda by the terrorists to propagate its ideologies, mobilize, radicalize and recruit people into its folds. The 17-year Boko Haram conflict has dominated the Nigerian news media space despite the various challenges and pressures journalists covering the conflict were confronted with as earlier highlighted in this study.

Another implication from this study is that the near absence of the voice of the woman caught up in the Boko Haram conflict in news media narratives coupled with her misrepresentation/ underrepresentation as powerless/helpless suggest that there is gender stereotyping taking place in the news media against women. Findings also demonstrate the intersectionality of patriarchal discrimination with other social structures and identities of gender, age, race, religion, colonialism, class and ethnicity with other forms of oppression have greatly disadvantaged Nigerian women.

The importance of equal representation of the various segments of society cannot be overemphasised. The Hutchinson Commission for the Freedom of the Press (1949) argued that “when the images [the media] portray fail to present the social group truly, they tend to subvert judgement” (p. 30). Gordon et al. (2011) also argued that “media portrayals and news coverage of the society influence what takes place between individuals and groups in their unmediated social, political, and economic interactions. If this is at all valid, ignoring minorities or regularly portraying them negatively rather than as contributors to, and participants in, the society will make it hard for anyone [...] to view them-or interact with them” (p. 131). Women in the conflict therefore face the double tragedy of been traumatised by the Boko Haram sect

and stigmatised by the society which is perpetuated by the media with the use of gender stereotypes and patriarchal phrases.

One of the strategies to address this is by changing media narratives about women, giving them the voice and the platform to express these experiences. Wasserman (2008) puts it succinctly when he argued that “the media can facilitate the restoration of dignity on a symbolic level by equitable representation of marginalised groups, but also by changing the perspective from which they choose to represent social reality” (p. 85). The importance of women journalists covering conflicts and giving a different perspective to media narratives cannot be overemphasised. This is because universally, women journalists are telling important news stories that were not always being told before, probably because the woman is first trusted as a woman and she can see what her male counterparts cannot see (Abeer, 2017). Similarly, stories by female reporters are more likely to challenge stereotypes than those filed by male reporters (Gallagher et al., 2010). As such, there is a link between the participation of women in the media and improvements in the representations of women.

Despite concerted efforts by women activists and groups fighting for women’s rights within the ambits of Nigeria’s tradition, culture and religion, women continue to be marginalised. Female journalists are also constrained by patriarchal norms and societal values. This study also argues that the news media is one of the major institutions upon which patriarchal practices are built and sustained in Nigeria. As findings in this study suggest, media organizations do not often assign female reporters to conflict zones. Women journalists only report from the fringes of the conflict. Shahba (2017 as cited in Abeer, 2017) argues that “Patriarchy is not a man. It is a system that everyone contributes to [and] the first obstacle starts within the newsroom” (p. 73). If an important segment of society is not heard and is rendered voiceless by the news media and society, the very essence of development journalism is defeated. This is because for society to develop, there is the need for all the various segments

to be represented in the communication of ideas, issues and problems. This can be achieved through a change and reorientation on how women are viewed as news sources, as their input and media interpretation about issues and events that affect might be conceptualised differently. This study argues that if the confidence of female journalists is built and they can cover conflicts, they can provide the platform upon which the experiences of women will find expression.

## **MAIN CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE STUDY**

A significant and valuable contribution of this study to media studies, not found in previous research so far examined is an understanding of factors that shape news media representations of women in the Boko Haram conflict. This study confirms findings from previous researches about the power patriarchy holds over the woman and how it has invariably permeated every sector of the Nigerian society including the news media. This work challenges existing patriarchal structures that have pervaded the political, social, economic, religious and educational sectors. This work therefore opens a news vista for further research into media representations of women in conflicts. Most significantly, findings will produce additional information and knowledge on the inter-relationship between the news media and the coverage of conflicts, on the one hand, and its impact on women, on the other.

Studying news media representations of women in the Boko Haram conflict has not only provided some insights into the extent of women discriminated status, it has also provided an understanding of the workings of patriarchy and the factors that feed it. Conclusions drawn from this study have provided an insight into how gender stereotypes and patriarchal oppression can be addressed through the news media. The reasons offered which range from the cultural, religious and contextual factors have broadened understanding of news media representations of women in conflicts.

This work therefore offers one of the first attempts at understanding the dynamics behind gender intersectionality in the Nigerian context and the interplay of other identities and social structures in the oppression and marginalization of women and ways of addressing them.

Findings in this research have similarly added to an understanding of Nigerian news media framework of regional parallelism as proposed by Yusha'u (2010). This knowledge will further guide future researchers about how the framework of regional parallelism has influenced and can be applied to understand news media representations which take the colouration of the social, political, economic, and ethnic factors of their owners and the environment within which they operate.

This study also adds to knowledge about who sets the media agenda and the roles elite media play in shaping the media agenda of other less influential news media. This thesis further highlights the influence of foreign news media over Nigerian news media and the factors responsible for this. Answers to these questions and many others in this study offers the much-needed insight into inter-media agenda setting role of the media.

There is the need to include inter-media agenda setting in future studies that examine the influence of media from more developed nations to media content and production in Nigeria and Africa in general and how this influence impacts news generally. Further research on the role of inter-media agenda setting will assist media scholars to better investigate factors that influence the news selection process in developing nations. Due to the influence of the foreign news media over Nigerian news media as findings have shown in this study, there is also the need for future research on this influence especially in the face of lack of balance in international news flow from foreign news media to Nigerian news media.

Understanding the intersectionality of gender and other identities of ethnicity, race, class, and age with patriarchal discrimination and other forms of oppression against women is

one of the first steps towards addressing the unequal status of women in society. More specifically, the current study raises the possibility that the only way that patriarchal influence in the Nigerian society can be addressed is through societal reorientation right from the family unit.

To add to a better understanding of the experiences of women in conflicts like the Boko Haram conflict, there is the need for further research with more journalists spread across all media forms. Future studies might consider expanding other media forms to include social media platforms, broadcast media, magazines and additional newspapers. Similarly, more media analysts, media scholars, and foreign correspondents covering the African continent might be included in future research about news media representations of women in conflicts. Trends that emerged from this study also call for the expansion of the study period to give a more representative generalization on news media representations of women in the Boko Haram conflict.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Findings from this study have shown a major societal and systemic decay in the Nigerian state. The fault as this study demonstrates, lies with major structural and systemic failure from all sectors of the society: political, religious, educational, economic. Again, a major result of this is the unequal status of women which finds expression in every area of their lives, including the Nigerian news media. The first step towards addressing these issues is by solving the problems that have provided the enabling environment for religious extremism, societal decay and gender stereotypes not only in the society but the news media as. This should involve a multi-sectoral and multi-dimensional approach from all stakeholders including the three tiers of government: executive, legislative, and judiciary; the elites and politicians; religious bodies; educational and research institutions; women activists, civil society organizations (CSOs), faith-based organizations (FBOs), non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and the news

media. The problem should not be left in the hands of Nigerians alone. International development partners and donor agencies should also be more involved in programmes and policies aimed at tackling some of these problems.

One of Nigeria's major problems is the pandemic corruption that has eaten very deep into every fabric of the society. Government should re-evaluate its anti-corruption structures and policies to make them more effective. And result oriented. A starting point is by establishing a credible democratic structure from the national to the grassroots levels. An independent, honest, competent and non-partisan organ should be appointed to manage elections while a level playing field should be provided for all political contenders. Linked to this is the need for proper accountability and transparency in the conduct of government affairs by officials while there should be checks and balances between the three arms of government: Executive, Legislative and the Judiciary. The Nigerian government should undertake far-reaching socio-political and economic reforms to achieve equitable power and resource sharing among the citizenry.

## **STRATEGIES FOR COUNTERING EXTREMISM**

The Nigerian government should adopt a more proactive and a multi-dimensional approach to address both the symptoms and the root causes of terrorism and insurgency by developing strategies for countering violent extremism. Government's rehabilitation and reintegration programmes should adopt international best practices, which must be in line with Nigerian realities to avoid alienating the already traumatized victims of the conflict.

The government should also involve the community at the local level including teachers, parents, researchers, businesses, service providers, religious leaders, women groups, youth leaders, and security agencies, who should focus more on prevention of radicalization and recruitment. This approach will not only identify early signs of radicalization but will also



improve intelligence gathering about potential attacks. If established, this approach will similarly strengthen government-citizen relationship and build trust at all levels of governance.

The government should set up a committee of experts in the grassroots tasked with the responsibility of identifying, understanding and recognizing the early signs of extremism in communities in the North east. Linked to this should be the inclusion of women in the strategy of detecting early signs of radicalization among their children.

The government should tackle the root causes of growing radicalism in Islam by fully developing and strengthening the North East Development Commission (NEDC) and the Presidential Initiative on the North East (PINE).

Also, the government should improve the quality of life of Nigerians physically and psychologically as a matter of priority by formulating policies that will create employment opportunities for Nigeria's unemployed youths. A starting point should be the provision of quality and affordable education for all youths which be prioritised to break the cycle of poverty in the northern region of Nigeria.

Governments at all levels should collaborate with Northern elites to present a united front to address fundamental issues of poverty bedevilling the region. The government must investigate the internal and external sponsors of Boko Haram and block the financial flow. Similarly, the government should do everything within the provisions of the law to identify, name, shame and prosecute security personnel and politicians, who encourage religious/ethnic intolerance or benefit from them. To do this, a mechanism should be put in place to monitor, report and handle such cases.

The Government should also launch and sustain an intensive civic education program to monitor and halt politicization of religious messages and ensure a better understanding and appreciation of other religions as well as promote tolerance and mutual respect amongst the various religious groupings. This programme should be carried out in collaboration with the

news media, political forums, marketplaces, religious centres, and community viewing centres among others. State governments should be encouraged to reform Quranic education through the payment of teachers' salaries to check the prevailing incidence of pupils being forced to beg for alms on behalf of teachers. This again, can be carried out through the news media and the National Orientation Agency (NOA). Such civic education programme should also include violence prevention, conflict transformation and conflict resolution workshops in schools, religious centres, and marketplaces.

Although there is an urgent need to change the misrepresentation/underrepresentation of women in the news media by giving them a voice, increasing their visibility as journalists, and eliminating sexism in media content, the problem is deep-rooted and tied to the culture, tradition, and religion of Nigerian society. There is therefore the need for the adoption of a more radical approach, which must be multi-sectorial.

Strategies to tackle patriarchy must also begin from the basics. There is the need for societal reorientation to tackle all forms of patriarchal discrimination and other forms of oppression against the Nigerian woman from every sector including government. To do this, religious, educational, political, civil society groups and the news media should be involved in the campaign to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women.

Gender equality should be pursued and sustained through conscious and constructive efforts that will engender love, cooperation, peace and unity of purpose and co-existence. This approach will require an acknowledgement of gender norms and power imbalances and a concerted effort to redress them.

There is also the need to address the gender imbalance in all tiers of government by appointing additional women in policy and decision-making positions. To do this, the government should increase the literacy level of Nigerian women. A legal provision should

also be promulgated that will make it mandatory for governments at all levels to ensure 30% - 40% women representation in all affairs of the state.

As signatory to internationally agreed affirmative actions (1985 Nairobi and 1995 Beijing United Nations Declarations and the 1999 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women ‘CEDAW’) on gender equality in the political process, the Nigerian government must abide by these agreements. All forms of discrimination and oppression against women should therefore be criminalized in line with international instruments against their oppression. The Nigerian government should eradicate these practices through enforceable laws.

To protect women against the incessant attacks of the Boko Haram sect, government security agents should be properly equipped to provide security in communities especially to vulnerable women and girls. The Government should also provide a round-the-clock security in schools to protect schoolgirls from abduction, rape and forced marriages by the Boko Haram terrorist group.

The Government should similarly collaborate with international donor agencies to empower women to be self-reliant while grants should be provided for women groups to engage in businesses and self-help projects. Empowering women who have suffered from the excesses and atrocities of the sect will help them to reintegrate and rebuild their lives. The Government should also involve women in peace building and conflict resolution processes.

Further studies should be carried out to examine women’s oppressive status and factors that influence these oppressions in the Nigerian society. Similarly, Nigerian institutions of higher learning should introduce and include courses on gender in their school curricula.

To take concrete steps to change the social structure, there must be a mass mobilization among women, to surmount obstacles that hinder their full potentials as individuals and citizens

of Nigeria. Women must also mobilize themselves to form coalitions and pressure groups to fight discriminatory practices.

There is also the need to commission an international independent research body to collaborate with local independent organizations to carry out a thorough data collection and analyses of the impact of the Boko Haram conflict on the society. This will enable policy makers and organizations have a comprehensive and reliable data base that can be relied on.

One of the major problems of the Nigerian news media as identified in this study is the lack of objectivity in the reportage of events and issues due to regional, ethnic, political and religious bias. As a core demand for a socially responsible press, journalists can achieve a measure of objectivity by providing unbiased and factual coverage of both sides in any conflict. There is therefore the need for value reorientation through regular training programs, workshops, conferences and seminars with the goal of reviewing the concept of news and how it is covered. The Government, private owners of media establishments, development partners and donor agencies should collaborate in these training programs.

There is the need for an external body to regulate media practice by identifying, shaming and punishing journalists that are involved in unethical practices like the acceptance of brown envelopes. For example, bodies like the Nigeria Press Council (NPC) charged with the responsibility of regulating the media industry with respect to ethical and professional conduct should be strengthened. The Nigerian media can play a more effective role in the quest for transparent and accountable government if professional standards are followed.

Management of media organizations should give editorial independence to their journalists to ensure professionalism in news coverage. While it is important to put into consideration the interest of the owners, such interests should not override the ethics of the profession and national interest.

There is the need to counter negative stereotypes against women by initiating sensitization campaigns to enlighten the citizenry. The news media should be involved in spearheading these campaigns. Linked to this is the need for the media to recognize their role in mobilizing and inspiring women to aspire for elective positions. Women in politics whether during electioneering or not must always be on the news agenda. A first step towards this is for governments, development partners and donor agencies to commission future research on media representations of women in the Boko Haram conflict and similar conflicts in the African sub region.

Nigerian news media practitioners should promote transparent democratic governance and expose political and religious leaders who encourage criminal and terrorist activities. The media must also be encouraged to perform this role effectively without any fear of intimidation or harassment by state security apparatuses. The effort will also require improvement in the working conditions and training of journalists. In line with this, structures and policies to protect journalists and provide insurance cover especially for those working in conflict zones should be provided by media owners and the government.

The news media should also encourage the government to examine the root causes of the conflict and find ways of solving them than focusing mainly on the military approach. The news media in its daily reportage should also highlight the fault lines in the fight against the insurgency especially in relation to bad governance and systemic corruption without which all other measures will be in vain. The media should also encourage public debates on the causes of and ways to address radicalism in Islam.

The media should encourage and be in the vanguard of building trust between citizens and government and the need to cooperate with federal and state authorities to counter terrorism. The media must cooperate with military officials in managing correct information on military operations during insurgencies and cross check their facts before going to press.

The media must collaborate with stakeholders in the North to ensure that government policies directed at curbing the conflicts are properly implemented. The media could help in resolving conflicts by generating and encouraging consensus building between parties to the dispute.

Overall, this study recommends that an intersectional approach should be adopted to fight patriarchal practices that discriminate against women in general with emphasis on victims of violence like the Boko Haram conflict. Nwaolikpe (2014) argues that “The media should portray women as strong and achievers, [...] and not reinforcing prejudices and stereotypes of women by the society” (p. 46). The first step towards adopting this strategy is by listening to the experiences of women affected by conflicts. While this study calls on the news media in Nigeria to change its strategy in conflict coverage with a bias to women, female journalists should be at the vanguard of listening to the experiences of women and giving them a platform to articulate their views. To do this, female journalists should also form networks and partnerships with likeminded individuals and organizations. Women should also strategize to take up the challenge of their marginalization in the news media by working very hard to reach the top echelon of media organizations. This will enable them to initiate and effect policies that will include and involve more women in news making and production to change gender stereotypes and empower them with the voice and the platform to articulate their experiences.

To sum up, this study is one of the first attempts that examined Nigerian news media representations of women in the Boko Haram conflict. It examined how six national newspapers represented women in the 17-year Boko Haram conflict in Borno North East Nigeria. Drawing on postcolonial, feminist and media theories, this thesis argued that news media narratives about women in the Boko Haram conflict are often steeped in gender stereotypes and patriarchal phrases. Similarly, this work concluded that, the extent at which the Nigerian news media were able to perform their roles as development journalists depended on

how they have been able to counter some of the challenges that have militated against media operations in the country. To resolve the problem of women misrepresentation and under representation in the news media, this study suggested a multi-sectorial approach by all segments of the society. This research also called for a better understanding of the intersectionality of social structures and other forms of oppression against women, which will give room for a more coordinated and effective response to the marginalization of women.

Nigerian journalism practice cannot stand on its own because of the colonial legacies bequeathed to it by the British. This colonial heritage and the challenges facing the continent have permeated structures and institutions including the news media. Nigerian news media need to create content based on its indigenous and cultural uniqueness but not at the expense of the doctrines of fairness, truth and factual reportage of events. This work proposes that for Nigerian journalists to operate ethically and professionally, there is the need for the professional bodies guiding and standardizing media practice like the Nigerian Union of Journalists (NUJ) and the Nigerian Guild of Editors (NGE) to include some elements of ubuntuism as an ethical media framework and negritude into the code of conduct of the profession and to set in motion mechanism for compliance. Any new measures would only be successful if they are conceived and implemented in close collaboration with the editors and journalists at these media outlets (Slavtcheva-Petkova & Bromley, 2018). This means that some of the basic principles of liberal journalism such as objectivity, fairness, balance and truthfulness should be combined with the tenets of ubuntu as an ethical media framework and negritude in media practice in Nigeria. Where they clash, the basic ideals of community and been ‘your brother’s keeper’ as espoused by ubuntu should be upheld.

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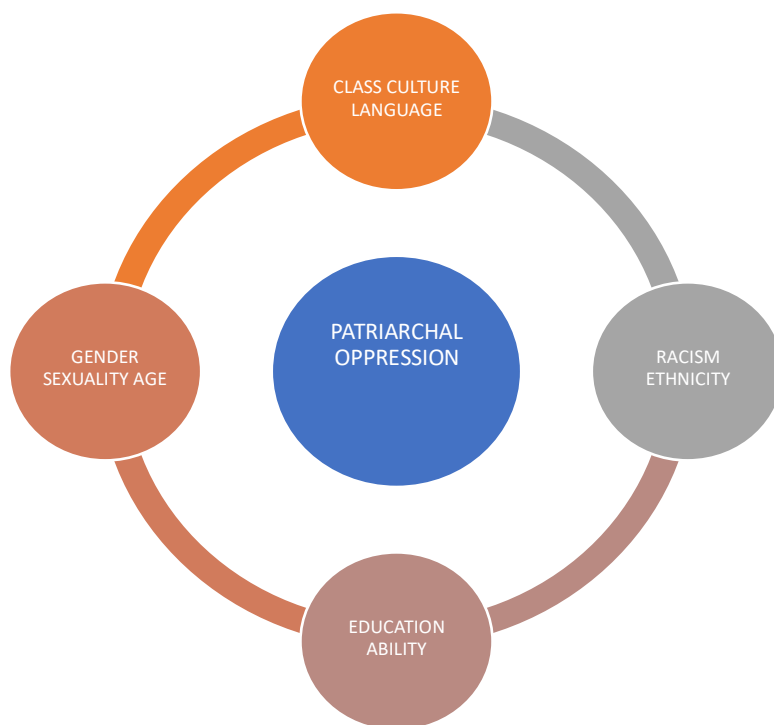
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-END-

## APPENDIX 1

**FIGURE 2:4**

**Intersectionality of gender and other social structures with patriarchal oppression**



Intersectionality of identities and patriarchal oppression

**TABLE 3:1**

<b>Zones</b>	<b>Human Poverty Index (HPI)</b>	<b>Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM)</b>	<b>Human Development Index (HDI Value)</b>	<b>Gender Development Measure (GDM)</b>	<b>Inequality Measure (INQ)</b>
<b>North</b>	34.65	0.244	0.490	0.478	0.49
<b>Central</b>					
<b>North East</b>	44.15	0.117	0.420	0.376	0.44

<b>South West</b>	48.90	0.118	0.332	0.250	0.42
<b>South East</b>	21.50	0.285	0.523	0.507	0.48
<b>South South</b>	26.07	0.315	0.471	0.455	0.38
<b>North West</b>	26.61	0.251	0.573	0.575	0.41

**Nigeria's Human Development Statistics by Zones 2008-2009: Source- NBS& NHDR Team (2008-2009).**

**TABLE 4.1.**

<b>Name of Newspaper</b>	<b>Name of Owner</b>	<b>Political Leanings</b>	<b>Religion</b>	<b>Ethnicity</b>
<b><i>Thisday</i></b>	Nduka Ogbia	Neutral but close to government	Christian South	South South
<b><i>Daily Sun</i></b>	Orji Uzor Kalu	Progressive People's Alliance (PPA)	Christian East	Igbo, South East
<b><i>Guardian</i></b>	Alex Ibru	Neutral	Christian South	Niger Delta
<b><i>Leadership</i></b>	Sam Nda Isaiah	All Progressive Congress (APC)	Christian North	North Central
<b><i>The Nation</i></b>	Bola Tinubu	All Progressive Congress (APC)	Muslim West	Yoruba, South West
<b><i>Daily Trust</i></b>	Board of Trustees	Neutral	Majority Muslims	Hausa Fulani, North

**Newspapers' ownership**

**TABLE 4:2**

Name	Date	Regions	Target	Editorial	Headquarters	Types of Stories	Online
<i>Daily Sun</i>	2003	south east	business, political elites, policy makers	objectivity, stylish and appealing	Lagos	Foreign news, crime, arts, information technology, health, politics.	very strong
<i>This Day</i>	1995	not partisan	business men, elites, style icons etc.	Objective, fair and balanced stories.	Lagos	business, politics, arts, fashion, education, health, law	very strong
<i>Daily Trust</i>	1998	north	political & business men, policy	uphold the libertarian principle	Abuja, federal capital territory	Foreign news, crime stories, arts, ICT,	very strong

makers, and health,  
 elites etc. social politics  
 responsib  
 ility

<b>Guardian</b>	19	not	business,	Fairness	Lagos	foreign	very strong
<b>an</b>	83	partis	political	promote		news,	
		an	elite,	Nigerian		politics,	
			policy	interests		business,	
			makers,			arts, law,	
			academic			health	
			ians,				
			diplomats				
			etc.				
<b>Nation</b>	20	south	business,	champion	Lagos	business,	very strong
	06	west	political	n return		politics, sp	
			elites etc.	to true		orts, arts,	
				federalis		world	
				m,		affairs,	
				defend		health etc.	
				democrat			
				ic values.			

## Newspapers, Date of 1<sup>st</sup> Publication, Editorial Policies, Ownership & Target Audience

**TABLE 4.3.**

**NEWSPAPERS**

<b>Advantages</b>	<b>Disadvantages</b>
-more permanent source of information	-newspapers can be biased and unreliable at times.
-current and past copies of local, national and international newspapers are available in the library or online	-can be easily influenced by political loyalties.
-the information contained in the newspaper may have more powerful effect than television.	-might not be understood by about 50% of Nigerians.
-clearly demonstrates the significance they attach to a given story through emphasis and significance (McGuire & Patterson, 1976).	-might be too expensive to the common man who is grappling with poverty.
-provide the most detailed accounts of events because they are not constrained by time and may be in-depth usually on a specific topic.	- accessing the newspapers in the rural areas can be very difficult.
-give readers a strong, lasting visual cataloguing of news.	- the updated online versions of Nigerian newspapers are at times difficult to access as they might not be updated regularly.
-strong brand recognition and readability.	
-up to date coverage of events, news and opinions.	
-cover recent developments and events with little time lapse.	
-good barometers for gauging the pulse of the people.	
-readily available and mobile.	



- allow for the examination of multiple types of collective action, facilitate longitudinal research and make quantitative research more viable
- built-in capacity to motivate readers
- vehicles for facilitating literacy empowerment among illiterate communities (Babalola, 2002).
- excellent sources of information on current events and developments in politics, the economy, technology, culture and society.
- support the other three types of media.
- loyal audiences, who are more likely to go back to their newspapers even after watching or listening to a programme on the radio or television.

#### **Advantages and Disadvantages of Newspapers**

**TABLE 4.4.**

<b>Key Events</b>	<b>Time Frame</b>	<b>Period of Study</b>	<b>Duration</b>
<b>Threat of Violence and First Recorded Murder of Female Polio Workers</b>	02/10/2012, 09/02/2013	28/09-05/10/2012 and 07/02/-13/02/2013	2 Weeks
<b>Chibok School Girls' Abductions</b>	14/04/2014	12/04/-18/04/2014	1 Week
<b>Female Suicide Bombing</b>	26/07/2014	24/07 – 30/07/2014	1 Week
<b>Rescue of Women by The Military</b>	28/04/2015	26/04/- 02/05/2015	1 Week
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>5 WEEKS</b>

#### **Key incidents that affected Women (2012-2015)**

## APPENDIX 2

### DEFINITIONS OF VARIABLES/FRAMES

#### Story prominence/location

**Front page:** this is the cover page of a newspaper and is the first *page* containing the most important news of the bulletin.

**Centre spread:** the pair of pages facing each other in the middle of a newspaper.

**Back page:** this is the last page of the newspaper and is of small news value compared to the front page.

**Inside front page:** Page two

**Inside back page:** Inside the page of the back cover

#### Story origin: designated by story by-line

**News reporter:** covers an event and writes them on behalf of a newspaper.

**Feature writer:** writes a human-interest story.

**Columnist:** writes regularly for a newspaper and usually expresses opinions.

**News editor:** Nigerian Press council (2018) describes an editor as “a person who is in-charge of all the journalists in a mass circulation newspaper, magazine, journal, an electronic medium or news agency and who is responsible for making final decisions about the contents to be published” (p. 12). The news editor therefore oversees news desk and the selection and production of news items.

#### Primary story source

**Interviews:** A question and answer session in which the reporter asks questions of one or more persons from whom news material is sought for a newspaper story.

**Press releases/statements:** This is a written statement about a matter of public interest which is given to the press by an organization concerned with the matter.

**Press conferences:** a prearranged interview or meeting with news reporters to draw publicity.

**Agency reports:** A news agency is an organization that gathers news stories from a country or from all over the world and supplies them to journalists.

**News coverage:** The activity of reporting about an event or subject in newspapers.

### **Types of articles**

**Cover story:** a main story in a newspaper relating to the picture on the front cover

**‘Hard’ news/ news story:** stories that are of serious nature that often deal with topics like business, politics and international news.

**Editorials:** Usually written by an editor that expresses a newspaper's own views and policies on a current issue. a newspaper article in which the editor gives their opinion on an issue in the news

**News analysis:** This is an evaluation of a news report that goes beyond the represented facts and gives an interpretation of the events based on all data.

**Feature articles:** Cambridge English Dictionary defines a feature article as “a special or important article or program, especially one that gives details about something that is not part of the main news [and] deals with a particular subject”. The Oxford Dictionary also defines a feature article as “a newspaper or magazine article or a broadcast programme devoted to the treatment of a particular topic, typically at length”.

**Opinion piece:** The writer expresses their personal views on controversial issues or items of news.

**Letters to the editor:** An issue of concern sent through a letter to an editor by readers and is meant for publication in the newspaper.

### **Frames**

**Prominence:** the significance/importance each newspaper attaches to a story on women and the Boko Haram conflict. This could be through story placement and position, content of the story and whether it received headline mention or not.

**Political:** Whether the news item relates to politics or politicians or whether it was attached any political connotation.

**Religious:** Is the story in question given any religious meaning or the setting of the story in relation to religion or not?

**Ethnic:** Does the news item have any racial, cultural.

**Powerless/helpless:** Being placed in a position of helplessness. Having no capacity to act or be effective.

**Attribution of responsibility:** Person that was held accountable for an incident in relation to women and the Boko Haram conflict.

**Label:** A word or phrase used in describing an individual or a group in a reductive or restrictive manner.

**Strategic/human interest:** This is in relations to the overall interest of the newspaper. Its editorial interest. Is the report in question of editorial relevance to the newspaper or not? Does the news report also appeal to the public's sympathy or curiosity?

**Conspiracy:** An act of working together or collaborating against somebody.

**Gendered:** In this context, this refers to the female gender.

**Patriarchy:** Reverence for men as the final authority over not only the family but other structures in the society.

## **APPENDIX 3**

### **CONSENT SHEET**

**PROJECT NAME:** THE NEWS MEDIA REPRESENTATIONS OF WOMEN IN CONFLICTS: THE BOKO HARAM INSURGENCY IN BORNO STATE, NORTH EAST NIGERIA.

**NAME OF RESEARCHER:** NANCY BRIAN MBAYA

**CONTACT DETAILS OF RESEARCHER:** +447867223160, 1426488@chester.ac.uk

**AIMS OF PROJECT:** The aim of this research is to examine and analyse the news media representation of women in conflicts. It will analyze empirical data generated through a case study of the Boko Haram Insurgency in Borno State, North East Nigeria from 2012-2015.

This is an academic research project as part of the PhD programme at the University of Chester (UK). The findings of this research may appear in the researcher's PhD dissertation, and may also be used for the purposes of publication and/or broadcast.

Participants may choose to withdraw their participation from the project. Notification of such withdrawal should usually be sent by email to the researcher within 24 hours of the participation.

Participants have the right, by request, to view the final outputs of the project. This right does not confer editorial control.

If participants have any questions, issues or complaints which they do not feel can be resolved by the researcher, then these may be addressed to the Director of Studies: Dr Alec Charles, Head of Media, University of Chester, a.charles@chester.ac.uk

If any participant in this research discloses information relating to any criminal activity and/or pertinent to any actual/potential criminal investigation, this matter will be reported via the Director of Studies to the University's Director of Legal Services and may be reported thereafter to the relevant authorities.

Information about participants will be stored according to the principles of the UK Data Protection Act 1998.

Participants will only be identified where consent for such identification has been given.

THERE ARE TWO COPIES OF THIS INFORMATION/CONSENT SHEET; ONE IS HELD BY THE RESEARCHER; ONE IS HELD BY THE PARTICIPANT.

I have read the information above related to this project and consent to participate in this project.

I give consent / do not give consent to being identified by name in the outputs of this project.

**NAME OF PARTICIPANT:**

**SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT:**

**DATE:**

## **APPENDIX 4**

### **QUESTIONNAIRE FOR NEWS REPORTERS ON NEWS MEDIA REPRESENTATIONS OF WOMEN IN CONFLICTS: THE BOKO HARAM CONFLICT IN BORNO STATE, NORTH EAST NIGERIA (2012-2015).**

- 1) How long have you been working as a news reporter?  
a. 0-10 years b. 10-20 years c. 20-30 years d. 30 years and above.
- 2) How do you get news stories for your newspapers?
- 3) What factors determine your reportage of an event?
- 4) The media reflects the social, political, economic and religious environment within which it operates. How have these factors affected the production of your news bulletins?
- 5) Again, the influence of ownership and control in the media cannot be overemphasized. Have the owners of your newspaper influenced its content?  
a. Yes b. No c. Do not know
- 6) If yes, can you give examples on how the owners of your newspapers have influenced its content?
- 7) How does your organization rate news stories?
- 8) Does your organization have any policy in place on women issues?  
a. Yes b. No c. Do not know
- 9) If yes, what are these policies?
- 10) In your coverage of the impact of the Boko Haram insurgency on women, what are the key issues that determine your reportage?
- 11) Do you self-consciously use inclusive phrases or are you guided by editorial policies?  
a. Yes b. No c. Do not know
- 12) If yes, can you give me an example of some of the inclusive phrases you use and the editorial policies that guide your reportage?



13) Do you think issues that affect men and women with reference to the Boko Haram conflict have received equal representation in your daily bulletin?

a. Yes b. No c. Do not know

14) If yes, how and if no, why not?

15) Do you think the news media is doing enough to highlight the impact of the insurgency on women?

a. Yes b. No c. Do not know

16) If Yes, how and if No, what can the news media do to change this?

17) Have you encountered any editorial pressure in your coverage of the insurgency?

a. Yes b. No c. Do not know

18) If yes, what are these pressures?

19) In the course of my research, I have come across many articles whose sources are international news agency reports. Why does your newspaper organization rely so much on these reports since the Boko haram insurgency is happening right at your doorsteps?

20) How do you view your responsibilities as a news reporter in relation to the impact of the insurgency on women?

21) How objective is the news media in its portrayal of women in the insurgency?

a. Objective c. Very objective d. Not objective

22) What are your reasons for this score?

23) Would you say the Nigerian news media's representations of women in the Boko Haram conflict have shaped and molded public opinion?

a. Yes b. No c. Do not know

24) If yes, can you give some examples and if no, what do you think are the reasons?

25) Have your newspaper's representations of women in the Boko Haram conflict shaped and molded government's response to it? In other words, would you say that government and other non-governmental organizations took specific actions because of your reportage?

a. Yes b. No c. Do not know

26) If yes, what were some of the actions taken by government because of your articles about the conflict, and if no what are the reasons for government's inaction despite your reportage about the impact of the conflict on women?

27) What should the news media do differently in relation to its representation of women in the conflict?

**QUESTIONNAIRE FOR NEWS EDITORS ON NEWS MEDIA REPRESENTATIONS  
OF WOMEN IN CONFLICTS: THE BOKO HARAM CONFLICT IN BORNO STATE,  
NORTH EAST NIGERIA (2012-2015)**

1) How long have you been working as a news editor?

a 0-10 years b. 10-20 years c. 20-30 years d. 30 year and above.

2) How are news reporters assigned?

3) What are the factors you consider in the placement of stories?

4) The media reflects the social, political, economic and religious environment within which it operates. How have these factors affected the production of your news bulletins?

5) Again, the influence of ownership and control in the media cannot be overemphasised. Have the owners of your newspaper influenced its content?

a Yes b. No c. Do not know

6) If yes, can you give some examples on how the owners of your newspapers have influenced its content and if no why?

7) Does your organization have any policy in place on women issues?

a Yes b. No c. Do not know

8) If yes, what are these policies?

9) As a news editor, do you think issues that affect men and women with reference to the Boko Haram conflict have received equal representation in your daily bulletin?

a. Yes b. No c. Do not know

10) If yes, how and if no, why not?

11) Do you think the news media is doing enough to highlight the impact of the insurgency on women?

a Yes b. No c. Do not know

12) If yes, how and if no, what can the news media do to change this?

13) Do your readers' views shape editorial policies of your organization?

a Yes b. No c. Do not know

14) If yes, can you give me some examples?

15) Are you free in making editorial judgement in relation to the coverage of the impact of the insurgency on women?

a Yes b. No c. cannot tell

16) If yes, can you elaborate?

17) Have you encountered any interference during the coverage of the insurgency?

a Yes b. No c. Do not know

18) Can you give examples of some of these interferences?

19) In the course of my research, I have come across many articles whose sources are international news agency reports. Why does your newspaper organization rely so much on these reports because the Boko haram insurgency is happening right at your doorsteps?

20) How do you view your responsibilities as an editor in relation to the impact of the insurgency on women?

21) How objective is the news media in its portrayal of women in the insurgency?

a Fairly objective b. Objective c. Very objective d. Not objective

22) What are your reasons for this score?

23) Would you say the Nigerian news media representation of women in this insurgency has shaped and moulded public opinion?

a Yes b. No c. Do not know

24) If yes, how has it shaped public opinion, and if no what is the news media doing wrongly in this regard?

25) Has your newspaper's representation of women in this insurgency helped in shaping and moulding government's response to the conflict? In other words, would you say that government and other non-governmental organizations took specific actions because of your reportage?

a Yes b. No c. Do not know

26) If yes, what were some of the actions government took because of your articles about the insurgency?

27) What should the news media do differently in relation to its representation of women in the conflict?

**QUESTIONNAIRE FOR MEDIA ANALYSTS ON NEWS MEDIA  
REPRESENTATIONS OF WOMEN IN CONFLICTS: BOKO HARAM INSURGENCY  
IN BORNO, NORTH EAST NIGERIA (2012-2015)**

1) Has the news media fulfilled its role of informing the public about the Boko haram insurgency?

a Yes b. No. c. Do not know

2) If yes, can you give some specific examples of how the news media has fulfilled this role and if no, can you enumerate some of the areas the news media has failed in performing this role?

3) Has the news media's reportage of the Boko haram insurgency shaped and moulded public opinion?

a Yes b. No c. Do not know

4) If yes, how and if no, in what areas has the news media failed in the discharge of this role?

5) The media reflect the social, political, economic and religious environment within which it operates. In what ways have these factors influenced the news media portrayal of the insurgency?

6) Again, the influence of ownership and control in the media cannot be overemphasized. How has the concept of ownership and control played out in Nigeria's newspapers in relation to Boko haram insurgency?

7) Looking at the news media's representation of the insurgency so far, would you say there is interference?

a Yes b. No c. Do not know

8) If Yes, from whom?

9) Can you give an analysis of how the Nigerian news media is covering women in the Boko Haram conflict?

10) How objective are the news media in its portrayal of women in the insurgency?

a Objective b. Very objective c. Not objective

11) What are your reasons for this score?

12) During my research, I have discovered that all the newspapers I have analysed so far rely heavily on international news agency reports as their news sources. As an academic, why is this so since the Boko haram insurgency is happening right at our doorsteps?

13) Have the Nigerian news media met your expectations in its representation of women in the conflict?

a. Yes b. No c. Do not know

14) If yes, how and if no, how has the news media not met your expectations?

15) What should the news media do differently in relation to its representation of women in the conflict?